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C. P. SCOTT

WORKS BY  
J. L. AND BARBARA HAMMOND

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THE VILLAGE LABOURER 1760-1832

THE TOWN LABOURER 1760-1832

THE SKILLED LABOURER 1760-1832

THE AGE OF THE CHARTISTS 1832-1854

JAMES STANSFELD

*Published by Longmans Green*

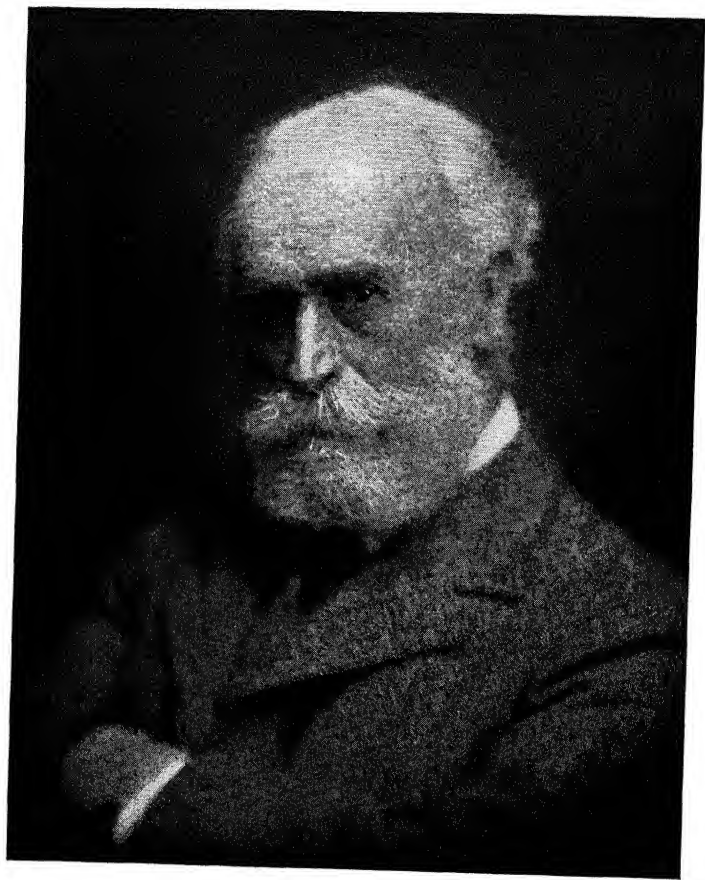
LORD SHAFTESBURY

*Published by Constable*

THE RISE OF MODERN INDUSTRY

*Published by Methuen*





*Photograph by F. W. Schmidt, Manchester*

C. P. SCOTT

C P SCOTT

OF THE  
MANCHESTER  
GUARDIAN

BY  
J L HAMMOND  
HON. D.LITT. OXON

LONDON  
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TO THE MEMORY OF  
NICHOLAS WILLIAM HAMMOND





## PREFACE

WHEN Mr Scott died in January 1932, his two sons and his daughter did me the honour of asking me to write his biography. The plan and shape of the book were still under discussion when Mr E. T. Scott, who had succeeded his father as editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, lost his life on Lake Windermere. I was thus deprived of his invaluable help. Mr John Scott and Mrs C. E. Montague have helped me generously with advice, information, and leave to publish letters in their possession, and I am greatly in their debt.

Mr Scott left, besides letters, a collection of his political conversations from the year 1911 to the time of his retirement from the editorship of the *Manchester Guardian* in 1929. These records were confidential, and they have been accepted by the British Museum for the use of students after a given date. Mr Scott had more than once discussed these records with me, and he had given me them to read. My first impression was that they were too confidential for use in this biography. But the appearance of such volumes as those published by Mr Lloyd George, Dr Addison, Lord Riddell, and others, caused me to reconsider this view, and after consulting the chief persons concerned and finding that they held that there was no objection to publication, I decided that a few of them, bearing on Mr Scott's actions and throwing new light on matters of public importance, might be given in this volume. I have to thank Mr Lloyd George, Lord Oxford's trustees, Brigadier-General the Hon. Arthur Asquith and Sir Maurice Bonham-Carter, Lord Grey's executor, Captain Graves, Miss Myrtle Hicks-Beach, Mr Richard Law, Mrs Woodrow Wilson, Mr Ray Stannard Baker, Lord Buckmaster, Miss Haldane, Mr Garvin, Mr Myles Dillon, and Sir William Wiseman, for kindly consenting to this course. I have also to thank many of them for allowing me to publish letters of which they held the copyright, together with Mrs Dugdale, Mr Baldwin, Mr Philip Bright, Mrs Robert

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Bridges, Colonel House, Mr Guy Morley, Lady Oxford, Lady Sybil Grant, Sir Michael Sadler, and Miss Stead. In almost every case the letters from Mr Scott printed in this volume are taken from copies that he kept among his papers.

By the kindness of Mrs C. G. Coulton, who has given me extracts from the diaries of her father, the late Mr Owen Ilbert, a Corpus friend of Mr Scott's, and of Mr Hughes, Dr Thorley's nephew, of Colonel the Hon. H. S. Davey, Mr Alfred Betsly, and the Master of Balliol, I have been able to publish documents bearing on Mr Scott's difficulties and life at Oxford. The late Canon Walter Lock also helped me from his memory of Scott as an undergraduate.

Dr Moberley, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester, and Mr Batho, Deputy Curator of the Art Gallery, have kindly given me information about Mr Scott's public life in Manchester.

Mr Scott's friends have been most generous in helping me with impressions and letters. I have specially to thank Mrs Lejeune, Lady Boyd Dawkins, Mrs Tout, Lady Bryce, Miss Grant, and Mrs Ashton. Mrs E. W. Barnes and Mrs C. B. Armstrong, daughters respectively of Sir A. W. Ward and Sir Samuel Dill, have been kind enough to let me publish letters from two of Mr Scott's oldest friends. Mr R. O. Hobhouse has done me the same service in the case of letters from Mr L. T. Hobhouse, and Mr Arthur Allen in the case of letters from Mr J. E. Taylor. Miss Dorothy Ward gave me information about her uncle, Mr W. T. Arnold.

My friends Mr W. P. Crozier, Mr David Davies, Dr G. P. Gooch, Dr Hubert Henderson, and Mr Arnold Toynbee, have helped me with advice and criticism. Mr J. E. Mossey, who has served three editors of the *Manchester Guardian* as private secretary, has given me the full benefit of his extensive knowledge and his ardent devotion to the memory of Mr C. P. Scott. My wife has helped me in every chapter with advice, criticisms, and suggestions.

Sir Spenser Wilkinson, Mr J. B. Atkins, Mr H. Sidebotham, Mr E. G. Hawke, and Mr R. C. K. Ensor, have been kind enough to give me impressions and information about the paper when they served on the staff.

## PREFACE

Lastly I have to acknowledge my obligations to a number of books: to two Family Biographies of the Scott family prepared by the late Miss Scott and Mrs Ryan, to the Memoir of W. T. Arnold by Mrs Humphrey Ward and C. E. Montague, to the Memoir of C. E. Montague by Dr Oliver Elton, to the Memoir of L. T. Hobhouse by Mr J. A. Hobson, and to Mr W. Hutcheon's recent book on *Gentlemen of the Press*. I must make special mention also of the admirable *History of the 'Manchester Guardian'* published by the late Mr Haslam Mills in 1921.

It was only in the last thirteen years of his life that I knew Mr Scott intimately. During those years I generally spent a few weeks with him every summer, living in his house and working with him on his paper. He discussed his public and his personal interests with the greatest freedom, and my impressions of his character were based on observation of his bearing and conduct in various circumstances. Of his work in the office I knew less than did his regular colleagues. Mr Crozier, the present editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, has supplemented my imperfect study by a chapter on that subject.

Mr Crozier had the advantage of an experience lasting nearly thirty years, and, as he was treated by Mr Scott with the fullest confidence, he had every opportunity for understanding his methods and his spirit. In my periodical spells of work on the paper I saw enough of the staff to appreciate and admire the different kinds of ability that Mr Scott had contrived to enlist and train in his service. Its spirit was unmistakable. At different times in Manchester, London, Paris, and Ireland, I have been thrown with leader-writers and administrators, sub-editors, and reporters, and nobody could have that experience without being struck by the sense for quality and the respect for the journalist's craft that seem to inspire all who serve the *Manchester Guardian*. No paper could better reflect the spirit of its creator.

J.L.H.

HEMEL HEMPSTED

May 1934



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## CHAPTER I

### THE SCOTT FAMILY

THE earliest of C. P. Scott's ancestors of whom anything is known is John Scott, a yeoman, who, coming from Salisbury, settled at Ilton, near Ilminster, where he served the office of Overseer of the Poor in 1700. His second son, Robert, who was apprenticed at the age of fifteen to a linen weaver at Milborne Port in Somerset, married Hannah Sprint, granddaughter of Samuel Sprint, Vicar of South Tidworth, one of the two thousand clergymen who were ejected from their livings by the Act of Uniformity in 1662. Under this influence Robert became a Nonconformist, and from this time the family lived in an atmosphere of vigorous Dissent. Robert Scott's son, John, C. P. Scott's great-grandfather, who had a small linen factory at Milborne Port, was described as zealous 'in the cause of Protestant Dissent and Civil and Religious Liberty'. He married Mary Russell, daughter of John Russell, who was also in the linen trade, churchwarden, although a Nonconformist, at Bradford Abbas for many years. John Scott died in 1774, at the age of 53, leaving a daughter Mary and two sons, of whom the younger, Russell,<sup>1</sup> was C. P. Scott's grandfather.

The marriage of Robert Scott to the daughter of one of the ejected two thousand was an event of great importance to the Scott family. For it was an advantage in the eighteenth century, if a man happened to desire a good education, to be a Nonconformist shut out from the old Universities. The most famous of the sons of Oxford and Cambridge, from Gibbon and Adam Smith to Bentham and Wordsworth, acknowledged few obligations to their

<sup>1</sup> Russell Scott, then a minor, was plaintiff in a famous leading case, *Scott v. Shepherd*. Scott lost his eye by the bursting of a squib at a fair, and the Court had to fix the responsibility for the accident. I am indebted to Mr R. C. K. Ensor, who made the discovery, for the above information.

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life and training at college, where unreformed abuses almost choked the spirit of scholarship. The dissenting Academies, on the other hand, staffed by men of vigorous mind, like Philip Dodderidge, Thomas Belsham, and Joseph Priestley, full of missionary ardour, helped the eager youth who found themselves within their walls to think for themselves. Mr Davis pointed out in *The Age of Grey and Peel* that the men educated in these institutions included at this time such names as Richard Price, Godwin, Hazlitt, Gilbert Wakefield, and Malthus. These institutions were, indeed, the chief source of the critical intelligence of the time.

It was in these Academies that C. P. Scott's grandfather, Russell Scott, received his education. He was sent first to Daventry and then to Homerton. There came a point when the free use of his judgment, encouraged by the atmosphere of discussion, drew him away into Unitarian beliefs, and he migrated to Hoxton where Godwin had just completed his education. Russell Scott, who had made up his mind to be a Unitarian minister, had, besides his passion for knowledge, a strong sense of public duty which led him to supplement his studies by attendance at the London hospitals, thinking that a knowledge of medicine would help him if he found himself a minister in a country place. He was now in the early twenties, full of enthusiasm for his work in life, with a keen feeling for liberty, and moving among men of congenial spirit, for he had formed a friendship with Theophilus Lindsey, who had lately resigned his living to become a Unitarian minister and had founded Essex Street Chapel. His Unitarian views thus brought Russell Scott into an interesting circle. His medical studies had an even more important consequence, for they put him in touch with William Hawes, known to fame as the doctor who tried to save Goldsmith from his fever powders, and as the founder of the Royal Humane Society. From friend he soon passed to son-in-law. Scott married Hawes' daughter Sophia in 1790. They lived in Portsmouth, where Russell Scott had become minister of the High Street Chapel two years earlier. His salary never exceeded £130 a year, and their combined

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income was under £300. They lived simply in a small house, their one extravagance being their library.

A man of such strong character and sound education was certain to become a force in any town where he settled. Scott soon collected a distinguished congregation. One of his flock, John Pounds, a cripple, has perhaps as good a right as anybody to be considered the author of the project of the Ragged Schools. Scott's views in theology and politics were arresting and provocative, and a set of sermons that he preached on the scriptural claims of the devil caused something of a sensation. Lively placards on the walls of Portsmouth such as 'Old Scott is damned', and 'Scott and the devil are brothers', showed that he had excited an interest not confined to church or chapel. A subject so important, treated with the freedom that Scott allowed himself, naturally attracted the attention of rival theologians. In Chichester and Southampton eager congregations listened long afterwards to echoes of this controversy, and Scott's power as a preacher brought him the popular title of 'Oracle of the South'. After his death it was said in Unitarian circles: 'In Mr Scott's lifetime we had a bishop; now we are all equals.' That he was able to hold the attention of his own congregation is clear from the interest with which they followed his exposition of the case against the Test and Corporation Acts, for the exposition, he tells us, occupied an hour and a half. The robust endurance of the English Unitarians sitting in their pews would have done credit to the Presbyterians north of the Tweed, and helps to explain their success in politics, where it is almost as important to be able to listen as to be able to speak.

Scott's Radical sympathies led Priestley to predict, when leaving England in despair, that his friend would soon follow him. At one moment this seemed not unlikely. Russell Scott watched the famous treason trials of Thelwall and Hardy in 1793 with keen anxiety, and his sister-in-law, Sarah Hawes, stood by the side of Mrs Thelwall in the Old Bailey. If the verdict had gone the other way, C. P. Scott might have been born a citizen of the United States. Hardy and Thelwall were rescued by London juries at a time when the independence

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of the London juries was the last defence of liberty. In Scotland reformers were at the mercy of men like Braxfield, who lives in Stevenson's novel *Weir of Hermiston*. Two of his victims, Muir a barrister, and Palmer a clergyman, were sent to Botany Bay after a trial conducted with so little regard to justice that Fox declared in the House of Commons 'God help the people that have such judges.' They were detained at Portsmouth for some time before sailing, and Russell Scott, visiting them constantly, did all that was in his power to make their discomforts less difficult to bear.

Scott's Radical views did not prevent his election to the close corporation that governed Portsmouth, where, as it happened, the monopoly was in Whig hands, for a leading Whig, Sir John Carter, was a member of his congregation. So firm indeed was the confidence of the Aldermen in his influence that they made his son, C. P. Scott's father, a burgess when he came of age. The inclusion of this youth, then living and working in London, among the privileged rulers of Portsmouth, was perhaps stimulating rather as a symbol of the respect that his father inspired than as a symbol of the active part that Portsmouth was taking in the management of its affairs. His duties to the people of Portsmouth do not seem to have affected the general arrangement of his life, but it is pleasant to know that the young burgess was found in his place when the Corporation entertained the Duke of Clarence at dinner on his appointment to the office of Lord High Admiral.

This young man, C. P. Scott's father, called, like his father, Russell, was born in Portsmouth in 1801. He was an only son with one sister. He made a good start in life, for he was baptized by Theophilus Lindsey and vaccinated by his father, Jenner's experiments having left the Portsmouth doctors sceptical about his discovery. His education began under a governess before he was two years old. At the age of eight he left her care for that of his father, who, like many Unitarian ministers, kept a kind of family school, teaching Benjamin, Thomas, and William Hawes, and Hampden, Sydney, and Russell Gurney. Russell Scott's sister-in-

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law, Maria Hawes, had married John Gurney, a barrister, whose political sympathies had led him to name his boys after John Hampden, Algernon Sydney, and William Lord Russell. Two of these cousins went into public life; Benjamin Hawes became Under-Secretary for the Colonies under Lord John Russell, and Russell Gurney, who was Recorder of London, earned a wider reputation by his efforts in Parliament for the protection of married women and by the part he played on two famous Commissions, the Commission which inquired into Governor Eyre's conduct in the suppression of the outbreak in Jamaica in 1865, and the Commission which drew up the Treaty of Washington on the Alabama dispute in 1871.

Young Russell Scott, brought up in this atmosphere, was a politician and theologian in the nursery. 'I remember,' he wrote later, 'that every Sunday evening I went into my father's library, not merely to repeat my catechism, but to be instructed in controversial Theology, and I believe that at seven years old at latest I fancied myself as well acquainted with the objections to the [doctrine of the] Trinity as I do now. I was moreover vastly well acquainted with politics. I can remember the principal political circumstances of the years 1809 and 1810—the Archduke Charles' battles, Bonaparte's marriage, the Walcheren expedition, the taking of Flushing, the attempts to turn out the then administration, the duel between Lord Castlereagh and Mr Canning, and the motion with respect to the conduct of ministers made by Mr Whitbread and carried by a majority of seven (I do not know that I have read or heard of it from that time to this).' His enthusiasm seems to have survived this stern test. When he was thirteen his cousin, John Edward Taylor, sent him as a present a political pamphlet published by William Roscoe, the well-known Liverpool Liberal. His father writing to Taylor said: 'The viand you so kindly intended for Russell almost intoxicated him for a time. Roscoe's pamphlet was continually in his hand and he could talk of nothing for some days but Roscoe and Canning.'

Russell Scott said of himself in later life that his education had made him a precocious child, contemptuous of other

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children and avoiding the amusements proper to his age, and that his mind became a sort of hothouse plant suffering in vigour from the artificial and undue excitement to which it was subjected. He criticised also the Puritan tone of his home where dress and personal attractions were treated as improper topics for discussion. He escaped the nervous collapse which John Stuart Mill suffered as the result of a similarly intensive and limited education, but he believed that in consequence his faculty of observation was permanently affected. For two years he had among his schoolfellows his cousin Benjamin Hawes, who was four years his senior. The two became great friends, but Benjamin left when Russell Scott was twelve, and Scott considered that the next four years of his life were wasted or worse. He was given some authority over his younger cousins. He despised them and they hated him. He learned nothing more, was unhappy, overbearing, and self-centred. He accused himself of lack of feeling for his parents, though his mother was the tenderest and most affectionate of women. These were his reflections as a man of thirty, on his upbringing, and they show that even before the days of Freud, children were to be found who criticised the mould in which their early life had been cast.

Russell Scott left home in 1817 at the age of sixteen to begin a commercial career in the office of a London accountant named Adams. The boy made his home with his uncle, Thomas Hawes, on whose advice he had entered this office, at Lavender Hill in the agreeable village of Wandsworth.

A letter that he wrote about this time to himself in order to make a record of his opinions on all sorts of subjects shows that he was critical of his relations and surroundings. 'In Uncle Benjamin I see a man of warm temperament and strong feelings, almost exhausted by his unremitted attention to business. For his kindness to me he has a claim on my gratitude for the remainder of my life, notwithstanding the occurrence of a breeze or two. Of Aunt Benjamin I say nothing, convinced that it is not necessary to commit to writing anything respecting her in order to enable me at any future period to know what are now my sentiments respecting her. In Benjamin I fancy I see a character yet unformed. Time

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and circumstances will prove what he will be; of this I cannot judge; with a delightful flow of spirits and talent for conversation, he possesses, however, a haughtiness sometimes intolerable, which once very nearly occasioned a breach between him and myself. He estimates too highly his consequence in the family and the world, and sometimes entertains a contempt for those of inferior rank, by no means amiable. Uncle Thomas, without any very great exertion of body or mind, has risen to the station in life he now holds. He is kindly disposed to every one. His friends would think a little more attention to dress by no means thrown away by him.'

The young Benjamin here described is the Benjamin Hawes who had afterwards an active career in politics. He was in Parliament from 1832 to 1852 and as Under Secretary for the Colonies in 1846 had a sharp duel with Disraeli over the sugar duties. He secured two reforms of importance: the appointment of a Fine Arts Commission and the opening of the British Museum on holidays.

Young Russell Scott was not long under the eyes of Mr Adams, for in 1818 his two uncles, Thomas and Benjamin Hawes, joined Cory in a coal business which afterwards became famous, and Russell Scott was put into the counting-house with the prospect of a partnership when he came of age. The two uncles had a soap factory at the Old Barge House on the south side of the river opposite Temple Gardens. They had been helped in youth by Scott's parents, who had lent them all their capital, and the arrangement made with Cory was designed as a return for that service. Scott's hours were from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. and he was expected to keep them. Once when he was late he found on his desk a note from his uncle, crisp in style if a little uncertain in grammar. 'My dear Russell,—Was I you I would be the first, certainly not last. I have been up since  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 4, been to Newgate Market, done my business there, & home  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 6. I hold it as a maxim, no business can be well conducted without the Eye of a principal from beginning to end.—Yours affectionately, B. H.'

To be near his work the young man lived in two small rooms in Bennett Street for which he paid 11s. 6d. a week. His



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salary was £100 a year. His life was hard, but he found recreations that suited his tastes. He enjoyed Hazlitt's lectures on poetry at the Surrey Institution and sometimes spent the evening with his Hawes and Gurney relations. On Sundays he refreshed his spirit with the sermons of the well-known Unitarian minister, Dr Rees, at a chapel in Blackfriars, and his body by a gallop on Hampstead Heath.

In 1823 the young man became a partner. His great-uncle Benjamin Hawes, a starch-maker in Thames Street, who had died recently, left the boy's mother £5,000 and with this sum together with the £3,000 that had been lent to the brothers Hawes, young Scott bought out his uncles and became Cory's sole partner. He paid his parents five per cent on their loan. Scott was welcomed by Cory, whose relations with his Hawes partners had been uncomfortable, and he seems to have introduced stricter methods into the business, as well as a higher standard of integrity. He used to tell a story that his insistence that coals should not be advertised as twice screened unless they had been so treated had caused some consternation at first. He was reproached by Cory with neglect in his business when he was pursuing an unsuccessful courtship, but the letter in which the complaint was made ended with handsome compliments to Scott's behaviour as a partner. Scott himself said in a memoir which he wrote some years later that by the detection of serious errors in the stocktaking he was 'largely instrumental in rescuing the concern from approaching ruin'. The partnership lasted nine years.

Scott may have been right in thinking that his early political education was a misfortune, but his happy marriage was the result of his political enthusiasm. In March 1831 he went to a dance in Lavender Hill and there he met Isabella Civil Prestwich, who came of a well-known Lancashire family. She was the daughter of Joseph Prestwich, a wine merchant living in South Lambeth, and sister of Joseph Prestwich, afterwards famous as a geologist. Isabella Prestwich was on fire over the wrongs of the Poles, and Scott's sympathy with her indignation grew into a warmer sentiment. Matters advanced during the summer and he did himself a good turn by getting Mrs Prestwich and her daughter seats

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for a debate in the House of Commons. They were married in September 1832.

In 1838 Russell Scott's partnership with William Cory came to an end. Whatever is to be said in criticism of his upbringing, a man who, when making money, could step aside in the prime of life from that race for a fortune in which most of the enterprise of his age was absorbed, must have kept some remarkable qualities unimpaired by his education. Scott had then about £40,000. He managed his investments with great skill, and his fortune, happily as it turned out because a time came when it was needed for a great public purpose, was considerably increased before his death. He took an interesting old house at Gaddesden Hoo, near Hemel Hempsted, where he lived for six years. There, true to family traditions, he founded a village school. In 1846 he removed to Bath where he and his rapidly growing family lived very simply for nine years, but they found that they had little society outside the Unitarian circle and they decided to move to London. In 1856 they settled in Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park. Russell Scott found scope for his energy and public spirit as director of the Metropolitan Association for improving the dwellings of the industrial classes and as the friend of many philanthropic institutions. His keen interest in public affairs, manifested in his letters to his son Charles, was maintained to his death in 1880.

## CHAPTER II

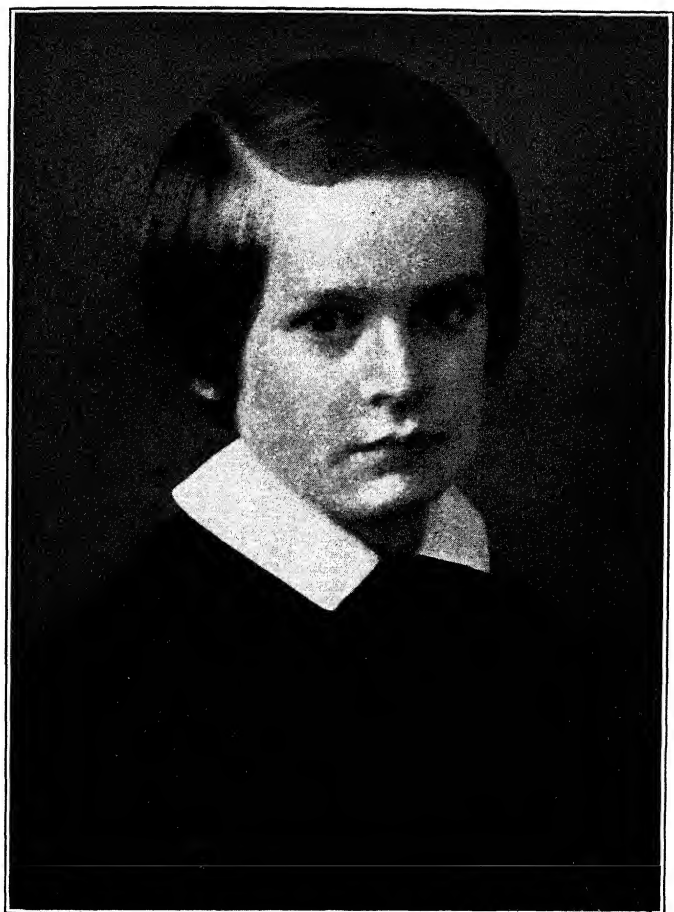
### SCOTT'S EDUCATION

CHARLES PRESTWICH SCOTT was born at Bath in October 1846, the eighth child of his parents; the ninth and last child died in infancy. He was thus in very different circumstances from his father, and his childhood, spent in the society of three brothers and four sisters<sup>1</sup> of whom he was fond, was exceedingly happy. When he was seven years old he was taken with his eldest sister to Malaga for the sake of her health and a picture given of him at this age shows that he developed quickly.

Charlie is at present in bed nursing a troublesome cough. He was told he might get up after he had finished his breakfast, but he preferred staying in bed, and reading a French book to which he has taken a fancy. Mamma bought him a story book, but he did not at all care for it, and declared he did 'not like stories about M. Beau and all that, but something dreadful like the Bible.' I suppose it is owing to the notice taken of him during the journey, and indeed since, that he has grown the most good for nothing bold little fellow imaginable, with twice the spirit and self importance that he had at home, but it is no doubt also owing to his excellent health. Notwithstanding his cough he grows quite fat and strong.

Scott remembered well this phase of self-satisfaction. In his old age he said to a friend, Lady Boyd Dawkins, who asked about his childhood: 'Yes; I was a very nice little boy. I used to go about saying "Everybody loves dear little Charlie." What a little prig I must have been.' To the same friend he gave a youthful memory of how one day in a fit of

<sup>1</sup> Sophia, b. 1833, d. 1854; Isabella, b. 1834, d. 1932; Catherine, b. 1836, d. 1930; Russell, b. 1837, d. 1908; Sarah, b. 1840, d. 1928; Arthur, b. 1842, d. 1876; Lawrence, b. 1844, d. 1930.



C. P. Scott as a child



## SCOTT'S EDUCATION

temper he kicked his French governess, and then spat at her. To his unutterable amazement she retaliated by spitting at him. It was a shattering blow to his conception of the right ordering of the Universe, in which such things were not done. Little boys might, under provocation, occasionally spit at their elders, but that the elders should spit back was unutterable. He remembered vividly the shock of the moment.

One of Scott's lasting enthusiasms began in childhood. All through his life he took intense pleasure in flowers, and as an old man he said that one of the happiest times of his life was a winter he spent with his family at Algiers when he was eleven years old. He and his brother Lawrence roamed the country and collected over 2,000 specimens of wild flowers, a collection that still survives.

Scott's father was no believer in the public schools and Charles was sent, like his elder brothers, to a school at Brighton, known as Hove House, conducted by a Unitarian Minister of the name of Malleon. From there he went on to Clapham Grammar School, then in the hands of Charles Pritchard, a notable educational reformer, and still more famous as an astronomer. After two years at this school, Scott, who was thought to be delicate, was sent to the Isle of Wight to be coached by the Rev. Arthur Watson.

He had a few excitements, among them visits to Newport to hear some 'very satisfactory sermons from Mr Thomas'. Others that would perhaps be more generally appreciated were a charity ball from which he returned at six in the morning, and a visit with a friend to 'old Pritchard' then living at Freshwater. The two young men, pleased with their host and still more pleased with his daughters, arranged a cricket match in that part of the island. They were badly beaten, but this did not matter for they 'had a jolly day with the Pritchards and came back vowing that the two Miss Pritchards were out and out superior to the nine Muses.' When leaving he wrote to his sister that Old Watson in many respects taught him well, but that the most useful piece of learning he had acquired was the habit of steady work.

At school and in the Isle of Wight Scott corresponded with his father on public affairs and theology. His father, while

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holding strong opinions on most questions, was anxious that his son should think for himself. In writing to him on his seventeenth birthday, he pressed this point.

One thing more I will just say, for unfortunately time presses—that is, if in the formation of your opinions, you should be led to the adoption of views materially different from mine, it will be to me a matter of but slight regret, provided only I can feel a perfect conviction that your views, whatever they may be, are fairly arrived at. That no fear of the world's opinion, or even of the world's scorn, no deference to a majority, no shadow of influence from considerations of what may be most conducive to your own interest, your own advancement, or even to your own opportunities of being useful, has, consciously or unconsciously, determined them.

The son's views were treated by his father with a respect that does not always dignify that relationship. Russell Scott was less Radical than his father had been; though ready for some enfranchisement of the working classes, he dreaded the prospect of an electorate in which they had the predominating voice. But he soon grasped the importance of Gladstone, whom he described as combining the brilliance of Canning with the integrity of Althorp.

In 1865 Scott went up to Oxford. The University Act of 1854 had thrown open the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to Nonconformists, but until 1871, when all religious tests were abolished, the several Colleges could make what conditions they liked. We may put it that the Act of 1854 threw open the Universities, and the Act of 1871 the colleges. Scott found that at the Queen's and Christ Church, the first two colleges of his choice, the want of a certificate of baptism was an obstacle. Ultimately he was accepted at Corpus, and he went into residence in October 1865.

The inquiries that were made on Scott's behalf produced a number of letters which may well be given in full, for the interesting light they throw on the Oxford of the sixties. Horace Davey, afterwards Lord of Appeal, and Mr. E. S. Beesly, the well-known Positivist historian, corresponded on

## SCOTT'S EDUCATION

the subject with Jowett, afterwards Master of Balliol, and Thorley, afterwards Warden of Wadham.

OXFORD, *November 2, 1864*

MY DEAR BEESLY,

I fear I cannot give you a very precise answer to your question. At both Trinity and New the matter seems to be entirely in the hands of the head, the tutors having nothing to do with it. At Trinity Duckworth does not think the President takes much notice of the men attending Sacrament, but I gather from him that systematic absence would be noticed. He thinks it possible the thing might be managed there—indeed they have already had a Presbyterian who did not attend the Sacrament. Still it does not appear that the President will, as a rule, knowingly admit persons not belonging to the Church of England. At New absence from the Sacrament does not seem to be noticed by the Warden, but he asks a good many questions before admitting men, and my informant does not think that a Nonconformist could get in. Of the two I think Trinity offers the best chance, though it seems very doubtful even there. Either Trinity or New are now good colleges—the best I think after Balliol and Corpus. I have delayed longer than I ought to have done answering your letter, but have expected each day that I should meet some one from whom I could make the enquiry, and so have put off going to ask about it. You know by this time the result of the Vice-Chancellor's proposal to pay Jowett. It will never be done unless some pressure from without compels it. And that in some form, I should hope would be the result.

Yours very sincerely,

G. E. THORLEY

From E. S. BEESLY, Professor of History at University College, London, to RUSSELL SCOTT.

UNIVERSITY HALL, *November 3, 1864*

MY DEAR SIR,

I enclose a letter received this morning, which contains more definite though less satisfactory information. I know Duckworth of Trinity, and would have written to him myself but I was not sure whether, though he is a Jowettite and



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Liberal, his liberality would stretch quite so far as to welcome a Unitarian. I think your son would probably not be interfered with any more than the Presbyterian was. But there is the chance that if the Head found he had got a Unitarian within his sheep-fold he might look round for some weapon to slay him with, and might find the Sacramental test most handy. Still it must be remembered that the Dons and the Head himself would shrink from a row (and such a proceeding would cause a great commotion in the University) and the latter might merely form a silent determination to be more wary another time. The Balliol Scholarships are advertised this morning in *The Times*.

Yours sincerely,  
E. S. BEESLY

BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD  
November 25, 1864

MY DEAR DAVEY,

Your friend is too late for the Scholarship, which was decided yesterday. There is however another Examination in February for some open Exhibitions at which he can try with a view to admission to the College. I should advise you to write to the Master and ask him to put his name down for a contingent vacancy, saying also that he wishes to become a candidate for the Exhibition in February. I think that this would be your best plan.

At Balliol he would not be required to attend chapel or divinity Lectures, or take the Sacrament, and I believe the same remission would be granted at Merton, Corpus, Lincoln or Christ Church. I am not certain about other Colleges: in none, I should think except, perhaps, Magdalen and Exeter would he be annoyed for non-attendance on the Sacrament: at least I think not. His Father need not say anything about his being a Unitarian until he comes up at Balliol, and then if he desires to have the exemption should apply formally. I will do anything that I can to assist you in the matter.

Yours sincerely,  
B. JOWETT

The Election to the Exhibitions is generally the second or third week in February.

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From E. S. BEESLY to RUSSELL SCOTT.

UNIVERSITY HALL, *January 25, 1865*

MY DEAR SIR,

It is a certificate of *Baptism* he wants not of Birth. Age is of no consequence except for scholarships. I never heard of a certificate of Birth being required for admission. If your son was baptised by a Unitarian minister can you not produce his certificate? Any kind of Baptism is valid. Or is it that *Registers* of Unitarian baptism are not kept? In that case, supposing the ceremony to have been performed, why not give your own assurance which I should imagine would be evidence good in law, when no register was kept.

It is pretty clear that the Provost wants to back out of it. But I hope you will hold him to it if you can. Did you tell him you were a Unitarian? I am told that at Christ Church they not only have admitted a Catholic but compel him to attend mass!

Yours sincerely,  
E. S. BEESLY

8 OLD BUILDINGS, LINCOLNS INN,  
*May 3, 1865*

MY DEAR MR. SCOTT,

I think you may rely upon their taking your son at Corpus, and I think you are fortunate in getting him into what is now probably the second College in Oxford.

It is much better for him to defer his matriculation as late as possible, because he will then get more time at the end when he is preparing for the Final Examination.

Believe me,  
Yours very truly,  
HORACE DAVEY

As a youth Scott had remarked in a letter to his parents that he supposed that the idea that Dissenters were not scholars was even more widely entertained than the idea that they were not gentlemen. His letters from Oxford show that at first he felt rather a fish out of water. Soon after he had gone up he wrote (November 10) to his father describing the three men he specially liked, Chavasse, Jacobson, and Ilbert. 'I

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contrived to tell Jacobson to-day that I was an extreme dissenter, and he received the announcement with a good deal of surprise, some amusement, and a slight admixture of horror, as became the son of a bishop. Ilbert I don't yet know well enough to make such a communication necessary.'

On April 24, 1866, he wrote the following letter to his father :

You asked me the other day how far my position at Oxford was affected by my religious opinions, and I'll endeavour as far as I can, to answer the question. You might not improbably be told that Corpus was a low-church college, and so indeed it is, so far as an evangelical President and a chapel service entirely without music can make it; but the Dons are Jowettites and free-thinkers, while the undergraduates are of decidedly high-church tendencies—those at least of them who are most earnest in religious matters, and who naturally are the men one would care most to know. Among the senior men of this school my ultra-heretical views have undoubtedly had a somewhat prejudicial influence—not that they are any the less civil or sociable when I happen to come across them, but that they have no object in cultivating the acquaintance of a man whose sympathies in religion are opposed to their own, and whom they have no chance of influencing. First year men stand very much apart from the rest, and among most of these I honestly believe my footing is but slightly, if at all, affected: some promising 'catholics' there of course are who cannot quite forgive my perverse attitude during the repetition of the creed, but as a bishop's son is my chief friend up here, I don't think I can complain much of bigotry. At Balliol, where people are all 'broad' instead of 'high', an Unitarian would, however, no doubt be more at home, for there he might hope for sympathy on many points and free toleration instead of sufferance.

On the whole I think a man must be very weak indeed if he cannot stand alone to the moderate extent called for, and for my own part am not sorry to have some slight experience, while at college, of difficulties which I suppose will be much greater after leaving it.

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A week later an encounter with the college authorities had led him to take a less favourable view of his position. On May 1, 1866, he wrote to his father:

. . . On Sunday morning immediately after breakfast, I was summoned for the first time into the awful presence of the dean in his official capacity. He asked my name (being a great philosopher, whose lofty gaze does not usually descend so low as first year men) and desired to know why I had not been in Chapel. I pleaded temporary indisposition, and was dismissed with an injunction not to repeat my offence. Now considering that during the whole term of my residence I have premeditatedly cut Chapel but once unnecessarily, and once arrived too late, I could not help thinking the Dean's practice rather 'smart' and was brought by my sore feeling to consider the question of compulsory Chapel more than I had. The principle strikes me as radically bad. Even at school it was I'm afraid the cause of more harm than good, and made fellows very indifferent to sacred names and sacred things. But up here, it seems an absurdity to make us at the age of two or three and twenty go to worship whether we will or no; and to inflict, as is I believe sometimes done, extra attendance as a *penalty*. These objections apply equally to all, but in my case there are more special ones. When at Clapham I heartily enjoyed the service (much of which is very beautiful and quite unobjectionable) and joined in almost all without paying so much attention to the words as the spirit. When I first came to Oxford I willingly agreed to comply with the regulations, and should not even have wished to be excused. Now, however, I find I can no longer use terms in the old loose way. With the whole influence of the place bearing against the opinions I hold, I am forced to define them to myself more clearly and to hold to them more tightly. As one who separates himself markedly from his fellows, I have to consider other people's opinion as well as my own conscience. Do what I will I cannot but feel that I cannot join heartily with those about me, and the feeling of isolation and in part of opposition and protest destroys to me very much of the pleasure of public worship. Thus though

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enforced attendance does not hurt my conscience (for when I cannot sincerely join I don't affect to) it assuredly does my feeling of independence. I feel coerced, bullied and the dean's admonition brought it home to me. Of course I am asked to do no more than I agreed and even if I had full liberty I think I should attend the week-day service. Saint's days and Sundays, however, I would gladly avoid, for two creeds and the Litany make too great a weight in the wrong scale. Merton, I believe, is the only college where the compulsory system does not prevail, but in other respects it is far from desirable. At Balliol, however, I should expect at least partial exemption might without much difficulty be obtained, as the system there is so advanced and liberal. Of this I am not quite clear, and should like much to know Darbishire, that we might compare notes. Blake's acquaintance, too, I am anxious to make, partly with the same object, partly because my out-college friends are few, and I think it only fair that my unorthodoxy, having lost me some intimacies should gain me others. . . .

I have given you almost my first ideas on the Chapel question, and may perhaps have expressed myself too strongly. In any case a remove to Balliol, even if practicable, would seem rather a strong measure.

His difficulties seem to have been resolved satisfactorily in a further interview with the Dean, described in a letter to his father on October 17, 1866.

Upon the first opportunity I spoke to Mr Furneaux with respect to my attendance at Chapel. He reminded the Dean of the matter, and in consequence I was this evening summoned to the presence of that august functionary. He is a gruff, peculiar man, but what he said was none the less satisfactory. It amounted to this. That the matter of attendance or non-attendance is to be left entirely to my own discretion so far as it is determined by any conscientious considerations or personal feeling, but 'I am to let the Dean know what I am doing'—that is, he wishes to know what to expect, and I have told him that he may look for my regular attendance upon

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all such days as are not Saint's days, Sundays or Litany service days. Should I fall short of this standard I shall of course be liable to similar penalties with other men. This is, I think, as it should be, and will I hope appear a satisfactory arrangement to you.

Scott's reflections on his position as a person of heterodox views in a society where tradition was so strong, might lead some to think that he was aloof and outside, living on the edge of this world. That view would be wrong. Dr Lock, a brilliant Corpus contemporary, remembered of him that he was very popular in his college. One of his college friends, Owen Ilbert, kept a diary and Scott appears pretty often in its pages. On March 9th, 1866, Ilbert records: 'Scott gave a big wine in my rooms which made the rooms smell most horribly'. On another occasion he notes with some satisfaction that he 'did a good deal of work in the evening, having refused to go to the Torpid wine in Scott's rooms'. On the 21st April, 1867, he writes: 'Hilton, Phelps, Scott, Sharkey, Richards, and I had an early dinner in my room. Then we rowed down to Sandford and ran down the Long Course as far as the heat would let us, Dick and Reid and Maitland riding. M. got pitched off on the road and damaged himself and horse; we had a most perfect day, got back by 7.30 and ate a very heavy supper in Phelp's room, cider cup, beer, claret cup and finally champagne, a tolerable mixture of liquors. A splendid summer's day; lots of eights and other boats about.'

Scott's other interests are touched on in the description of a visit the two made together to Iffley Church. 'A very fine old building and some tolerable new windows; heard Goulburn preach on "Faith", a most excellent plain practical sermon, cutting up Rationalists and High Church, but with great moderation. I had never heard a sermon with so much real matter in it; discussed Church matters with Scott, who seemed half inclined to be converted.'

Scott took an active part on the river, rowing and coaching the Corpus boat, and making incidentally a friend for life of Robert Bridges who was two years his senior at Corpus and a

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leading figure on the river.<sup>1</sup> He was secretary of the Anti-Mendicity Society and he spoke both at the Union and at the College Debating Society. One of his speeches at the Union was made in introducing a motion condemning the laws restricting the rights of Trade Unions. He was supported on this occasion by Strachan Davidson, then President, afterwards Master of Balliol, and opposed by Dr Lock who was afterwards Warden of Keble. The voting, seven for and twenty against, suggests that there was more distinction than volume in the attention that undergraduate Oxford was giving to the question.

After composing his difficulties with the authorities Scott took an active part in organising musical services for the chapel. 'Now that chapel has been made voluntary,' he wrote to his brother Arthur on February 14, 1869, 'we feel a more lively and genuine interest in the conduct of the service and accordingly have held a college meeting and petitioned the dean to allow us to introduce music in both the Sunday services. It was thought best to begin at first in a very modest way, so abandoning all ideas of choristers and Anglican music, we have determined, permission being granted, to see what we can do with men's voices in unison and Gregorians. The whole expense will be £6 a year for the hire of a harmonium.'

Scott's various interests did not prevent him from working hard for his schools. He wrote to his mother in March 1867:

I have taken of late to cold dinner in the middle of the day and a substantial tea, and find the change an improvement in every way. Port, however, is too heavy a wine for such early hours, so I've had common claret instead, If, however, you think Manzanilla likely to be beneficial, and as from your account I should judge it likely also to be nice, like a dutiful son I will bow to parental authority and at once lay in a stock. What is the price, and where should I best obtain the article—from the Chemist or Mark Lane?

<sup>1</sup> Bridges, writing to Scott on October 18, 1926, said: 'You have always held my admiration (in spite of your love for the late Mr Gladstone and his school), to say nothing of my personal affection, which you won sixty years ago.' His election to an Hon. Fellowship at Corpus in 1923 gave Scott all the greater pleasure because it made a new link between him and Bridges.

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I hope you are not at all anxious about me dear mother. This beautiful weather is most restoring and I have got rid of all my ailments. My new system of work too is much less trying and leaves me a delightful amount of leisure for other reading. I get up at 6.30, begin work rather before 8, dine at 1—tea at 6, and go to bed at 10. I can work from 8 to 10 hours according to my powers, and get from 1 o'clock to 4 or 4.30 clear for dinner and exercise. Isn't it perfect?

Scott, who had taken a second in Mods, was described by Furneaux in a letter to somebody else as 'in every respect one of the most satisfactory young men we have ever had in the college. He may not get the highest honours but will do very well, and few indeed of his age have such force of character and earnestness.' In those days there were two examinations in Greats each year, and Scott, after considering his papers in the schools in the Trinity term in 1869, decided to scratch, being doubtful of his first. He went in again in the Michaelmas term, when he appeared in the first class, the only Corpus name. Next year he tried unsuccessfully for a Fellowship at Merton.

The most important thing that happened to Scott while at Oxford was the gradual change in his outlook on religion. At first he had thought of becoming a Unitarian minister. In November 1866 he wrote to his mother:

Both you and my father alluded in your letters to a possibility I have often contemplated, but perhaps never spoken of to any one but Lawrie. He as you know was at one time very anxious himself to enter the ministry, believing it, as I do also, to be the highest vocation to which a man can dedicate his life and powers—so high in fact and so sacred as to make one shrink from undertaking it, unless in obedience to a strong call of feeling and of conscience. That I have felt so moved I cannot but admit, yet these aspirations have always been overpowered by considerations of an opposite tendency. I see in the first place no prospect of my mind being so definitely made up on religious questions as to warrant me in entering the ministry in any sect or party—especially when that one to which I at present am



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most warmly attached has so tremendous a weight of external authority against it as to make me think my present views may have been to a certain extent confirmed by the spirit of opposition. Secondly I have felt very strongly that, as you say, the church is far from being the only sphere of usefulness open—that in fact it may perhaps be by no means the most extensive—that a large proportion of a clergyman's efforts must be directed to those apparently petty and unprofitable ends, which made Robertson through life deem his ministry a failure, and that when these efforts are directed to wider ends, they are regarded too much *ex officio*, and are not so likely to obtain attention or success. Then again one of the main, if not the principal, office of a minister in these days, is to preach, and though I might find no special want of aptitude, I cannot say I should look forward with pleasure to writing two or three sermons of a certain length so many times a week. A book like *Ecce Homo* is worth a library of most sermons. Perhaps many of these points may seem trivial, and probably I may change my mind with more experience and more thought. I have, indeed, regarded it as one of the chief reasons for which I am thankful to be given three or four years at Oxford that if during that time God should see fit to call me to His service, I may be at once ready and well-prepared to enter it. I should much have liked to be present at the ordination service, and to have made Estlin Carpenter's acquaintance. It is a curious fact that among our whole Unitarian connection, there is not a single man of my own age I can call a personal friend. Moreover Mr James was the first Unitarian minister with whom I enjoyed anything like a conversation. . . .

Five days later he wrote to his father (November 18, 1866): ' . . . I think my dear Mother partly misunderstood what I said as to feeling the great apparent preponderance of authority against Unitarians—what I meant was that the very fact of being in a small minority is so likely to awaken one's combativeness as to make one perhaps blindly zealous for truths which are felt to be by others unjustly and hastily

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rejected.' He was still a professed Unitarian, and in February and May obtained leave to come home in order to take the sacrament.

By August 1869, his beliefs had taken a more settled form, as we learn from a letter he wrote to his father from Oban. He travelled up

. . . in company with a young lady (*seule*) who proved not quite so demure and retiring as young ladies often affect to be, so we talked a great deal. I had just been reading Mill's *Subjection of Women* to Bell, and my head being full of women's rights, discussed the subject as far as I well could with my travelling companion. Don't suppose that I agree with Mill's pamphlet (if you happen to have read it). He appears to me to have made a very bad case out of a very good cause and I heartily wish the ladies a more judicious advocate.

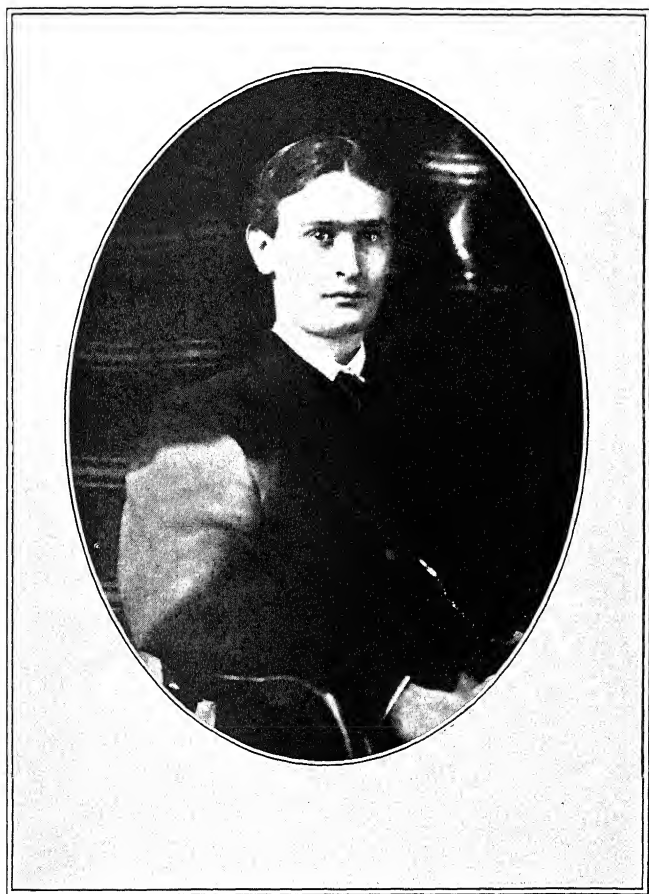
Another book I've been reading to Bell is Francis Newman's *Phases of Faith*, perhaps foolishly, for the book provokes thought on deep subjects which I cannot now spare the brains to think about with any intensity or the time to read about. I find myself thrown back more completely than ever upon practical religion. Of speculative belief I now have almost none which I feel I can fully trust. Certainly free thought is a high privilege and one from which it would be cowardice to shrink, but it has its dangers and it certainly has its pains. I believe in God and his goodness partly because my heart seems to witness to His living presence, partly because my reason tells me that the order of the world cannot be the result of chance nor its glory of malignity. I believe in the Son of God because I see in His person a moral ideal shining with divine brightness in the midst of a dark age and constituting a revelation not only to that age but to all subsequent ones. This ideal constitutes my religion. To approach it myself and help others to approach it is the chief aim of my life.

Thus when Scott went down from Oxford he had composed his mind on problems of religion and conscience on

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which many men recast their ideas again and again in later years. He said afterwards that this was due to *Ecce Homo*, which he read as an undergraduate, more than to any other influence. The work which was to occupy him for his whole life had also been determined. For while still in his second year he had received and accepted a proposal from his cousin, John Edward Taylor, the proprietor of the *Manchester Guardian*. Taylor was looking for a recruit for the staff of his paper who might one day fill the post of editor. He asked to see some of Scott's essays and was so well pleased with them that he offered him the post. There is no record of what passed at the interview beyond a very interesting letter that Scott wrote to his father a little later in October 1867.

Since my interview with Edward I have been visited with considerable compunction as to the part I took. The important point was this: I was saying that I hoped I might not be completely engrossed in my *Guardian* work as there were other matters in which I hoped to interest myself actively. Moreover that I thought we were coming upon stirring times, in which there would be a great battle to be fought on many questions of supreme importance, and on one side or other I hoped to fight too, might and main. Edward replied that I should have time and he himself should wish me to take part in public matters, but he knew these pursuits were very alluring, and of course my duty to the *Guardian* would always come first. I said 'yes', and rightly, for while a man has a certain work to do, it is his duty, as you have said, to do it thoroughly and to the very best of his ability. But I ought to have added that the time might come when for this very reason the path of duty would lie the other way, and that should it ever be God's good pleasure to give me power and opportunity to do better service in a fresh field, to that service I must be free to devote myself. Of course I cannot see my way now—How should I?—but God will show me what is best if I can but give myself wholly to His guidance. At any rate hand and will must be always ready to obey the call, should it ever



At Oxford, aged 20



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come. On the other hand, by binding myself down to a certain definite course of life, I should fall into the very sin of Ananias, and while professing to give all to God, I should be making a private stipulation in my own favour. The practical result is this—I would gladly go and work at the *Guardian* on any terms and with any prospects—for I feel that there is an opening there for usefulness such as I may never have again—but it must be on the distinct understanding that, though while I remain I give every power to my work, I am yet freely at liberty to go, should duty call me elsewhere. It follows that certainly at no time must my salary exceed the value of my actual services—possibly also that I am unfit for the very responsible position to which apparently Edward ultimately destines me.

You may perhaps wonder why I could not at the time clearly express so definite a resolution. I ought perhaps to have succeeded better than I did, but found it impossible to bare my heart to one who knows me but slightly, in the same way I can to you who know me well.

Perhaps you will contrive to express my meaning for me to Edward better than I myself have been able. It would greatly relieve my mind if you would endeavour to do so.

Before leaving Oxford, Scott had written his maiden article in the *Manchester Guardian*. It was not on Proportional Representation, or on Women's Rights, or on Trade Union law, or on any of the public questions that were occupying his mind. It was an account of a race on the Seine between the Corpus boat and a crew of Old Etonians.

Twenty years later the most brilliant of the writers who ever served the *Guardian*, C. E. Montague, first attracted Scott's attention by a skit in the *Oxford Magazine* on the Torpids, modelled on the style of Thucydides.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE SCOTT-TAYLOR ALLIANCE

WHEN Russell Scott the first was entered as a student at Daventry, he was taken there by his sister Mary, who was eight years his senior, his father being dead. Mary was a young woman of literary tastes, a friend of Anna Seward and thus a friend at one remove of Dr Johnson, and herself the author of *The Female Advocate* and of an epic poem, *The Messiah*. The classical tutor at the Academy was John Taylor, and he and Mary became engaged. Her marriage, long delayed in consequence of her mother's illness, did not turn out well. They were neither of them fitted by nature to make those accommodations of temper and behaviour that are necessary if two people are to live together without strain. The tension was increased when Taylor, who had long been restless and unsatisfied in his religious emotions, became a Quaker. But this unhappy marriage had a very important consequence for C. P. Scott, for Mary's only son, John Edward, his father's first cousin, founded the *Manchester Guardian*.

John Taylor was a Unitarian minister at Ilminster in Somerset when he made his change of religion. He and his wife then moved to Bristol where he opened a school. His wife died in 1793 after being married five years. She left two children, Mary Ann, born in 1789, and John Edward, born at Ilminster in 1791. After his wife's death, John Taylor, whose family was connected with Lancashire (he had himself been educated at Stand Grammar School, near Manchester), kept a Quaker school at Salford. Here the young John Edward was brought up. He was taught first in his father's school and then by John Dalton, who, after starting as a Quaker schoolmaster, was now on the high road to fame as a chemist. Thus, like his uncle, Russell Scott, he was under the influence in childhood of men with a strong

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sense of public duty. He had inherited also from his mother's family the literary tastes of men and women who enjoyed books and authorship, together with the habit of looking about the world in a critical and independent spirit.

It is not surprising that a youth so born and bred should have found public affairs more interesting than business. He was an excellent business man and after being apprenticed to a cotton manufacturer he rose so rapidly that he soon became a partner. Later he went into business on his own account as a merchant. But he could not be absorbed in business, nor could he, like some business men, take an interest in politics that was limited to their influence on his trade. As a youth he threw himself into the work of Joseph Lancaster, acting as secretary to the committee of a school he founded in Manchester. He joined the Junior Literary and Philosophical Society, and in 1813 he went up to London, visited Leigh Hunt in prison ('he is a very interesting and agreeable young man, and all things considered quite as comfortable as can be expected in prison'), bought a copy of the *Giaour* for his sister, and enjoyed the Covent Garden Opera. A letter to his sister throws a little light on his father's temper, for he ends by hoping that his father 'is in good health and (what is perhaps of more consequence) good humour'. He soon made his mark as a pamphleteer, and began writing regular articles in Cowdroy's *Manchester Gazette*. Those were days when to hold Radical opinions was a dangerous luxury, and the Manchester mob, emulating the example of Birmingham, had destroyed the first Radical paper, the *Manchester Herald*, established in 1792. Cowdroy's *Gazette*, though it started in the bad days of 1795, had a happier fate, and at the time of Peterloo John Edward Taylor and Archibald Prentice were giving vigour and spirit to its pages. Taylor wrote the manifesto of the Radical party on the events of that memorable day, and the immense effect of Peterloo on the minds of the English people was largely caused by his success and that of Prentice in despatching accounts of the conflict to the London papers before the official version became public.



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The founding of the *Manchester Guardian*, in 1821, is supposed to be due indirectly to a libel action in which Taylor had figured two years earlier. In the course of some riots in 1812 the Manchester Exchange was burnt to the ground. At the time it was alleged that this violence had been caused by a placard headed 'Now or Never' which had appeared on the walls of Manchester, and that this placard was Taylor's production. In July 1818, when a meeting of the police commissioners was being held in Salford to appoint assessors, somebody suggested Taylor as a suitable person, and the chairman, a Mr Greenwood, objected that he was the author of the handbill that had caused the Manchester Exchange to be set on fire in 1812. Taylor, having tried in vain to get Greenwood to withdraw, wrote a letter calling him 'a slanderer, a liar, and a scoundrel' and put the letter in the windows of the office of Cowdroy's *Gazette*. He was indicted for criminal libel at the Lancaster Assizes in March 1819, conducted his own defence, and was acquitted. The trial caused a great sensation. The jury were so long in retirement that their verdict had to be communicated to the judge in bed at his lodgings. One of Taylor's supporters at the trial, John Childs, was a printer of Bungay in Suffolk, and he said to Taylor as they returned in triumph: 'It is plain you have the elements of public work in you; why don't you set up a newspaper?' Two years later twelve men raised a thousand pounds between them to found the *Manchester Guardian* with Taylor as editor.

The *Manchester Guardian* started as a weekly paper, appearing on Saturdays, with four pages of twenty-four columns. The price was 7d., of which 4d. went to the Government. The circulation was most encouraging to the promoters. In March 1823 it was 1750: in November 1825, 2300. In December, after the incorporation of the *Volunteer*, it stood at 3400, and in 1845, a year after Taylor's death, it was 8700. These figures show the influence of Taylor's concentration on improving the technique of his art. He spared no pains. On one occasion he went all the way to Hull to engage as a reporter John Harland, who had made himself the most expert shorthand writer in the country, and after-

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wards rose to international fame. Once he found himself in the saddle Taylor was more active as a journalist than as a politician. It is true he was one of the first members of the Anti-Corn Law Association founded in 1838. But Peterloo was becoming a fainter memory, and his friend, Archibald Prentice, complained that he moved from the left to the centre and from the centre to the right. This estimate was pretty near the truth. The paper was hostile to Cobbett and to Fielden. In 1849 it denounced Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton* for 'its morbid sensibility of the conditions of the operatives' and more than once it was at odds both with Cobden and Bright. But Taylor produced a paper that was better in all respects than its predecessors in the journalism of the provinces.

Taylor was twice married. He married for his first wife his first cousin, Sophia Russell Scott, sister of C. P. Scott's father. Their married life, like that of his parents, was short, for she died in 1832, having been married in 1824, but unlike that of his parents it was happy. She was survived by three children, two sons, Russell Scott Taylor and John Edward Taylor, and one daughter, Sophia Russell Taylor. When John Edward senior died in 1844 he was succeeded as editor by the elder of these sons. At that time Manchester New College, which afterwards moved to Oxford, was in Manchester, and Russell Scott Taylor, a youth of brilliant abilities, had been well able to take advantage of the remarkable teaching of Martineau, F. W. Newman, and William Gaskell; but all the hopes that were built on his exceptional gifts were blighted. In 1848, four years after the death of his father, he was carried off by typhoid. When Russell Scott Taylor died, his brother John Edward was only eighteen, and the editorship of the paper passed to Jeremiah Garnett, a veteran of the fight for the Repeal of the Corn Laws and for the incorporation of Manchester, who was now settling down to a Liberalism more suited to Palmerston than to his radical critics.

John Edward Taylor the second, who was born in 1830, had the same kind of varied education as his father. He was first at a school in Higher Broughton kept by a Unitarian

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minister, and from there he went to a school at Worksop kept by Dr Heldenmeyer, a follower of Pestalozzi. In this school French and German were used for conversation and open-air pursuits were encouraged. The rest of his education was divided between a school at Whitby, University College School in London, Manchester New College, and the University of Bonn. At Bonn he studied law in addition to other subjects. He was called to the Bar, but he never practised, for he was obviously destined for the place that his brother's death had left vacant on the *Manchester Guardian*. On joining Jeremiah Garnett he soon found himself occupied with important innovations, for when the advertisement duty was repealed and the last penny taken off the newspaper duty in 1855, the *Manchester Guardian* took the opportunity to turn itself from a bi-weekly into a daily paper. Two years later it reduced its price to a penny.

In 1861 Taylor took complete control of the paper and Garnett retired. But he did not stay long in Manchester, and for some years the actual editing was done by a group of writers, Robert Dowman, H. M. Acton, and J. M. Maclean. The management of the paper was in the hands of Peter Allen, who married John Edward Taylor's sister, Sophia Russell. Taylor himself was working hard in London improving his paper. A London office was opened, two private wires were installed, a descriptive writer obtained access to Parliament, writers of the calibre of Tom Taylor, the editor of *Punch*, Torrens, the author of the important Housing Act generally known by his name, and Tom Hughes, the creator of Tom Brown, were enlisted as contributors to the London Letter. As Taylor did not wish to live in Manchester himself he was anxious to find a writer who shared his general political ideas and his views about the purposes of the paper, with whom he could co-operate from London. It is not surprising that he thought of his cousin, a young man who was making his mark in Oxford.

## CHAPTER IV

### SCOTT'S EARLY MANCHESTER LIFE AND MARRIAGE

SCOTT, who found himself at the age of twenty-five in a position of unusual responsibility and power, had been fortunate in his inheritance and his training. At a time when the Universities were only beginning to turn in their sleep, his father and grandfather had both been educated by teachers who were wide awake. They had both been in contact with active and independent minds, and their public spirit and sense of citizenship had been made all the more robust by inequalities of which men of their religion and their politics were specially conscious. Scott himself had the benefit of their training, for as a boy and young man he had been encouraged by his father to think and talk about public affairs.

Before going to Oxford, Scott had been under the influence of men of character in Malleson and Pritchard. Dean Bradley, one of Pritchard's pupils, described him as 'a young man full of fire, enthusiasm, and original ability.' Pritchard, afterwards Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, became famous as a man of science, but he was a man of science whose passion for truth and knowledge was subordinated to his strong sympathy with his fellow men. He said of himself: 'Providence made me an astronomer but gave me the heart of a Divine.'

It was Scott's special good fortune that in passing on to Oxford he passed from one stimulating society to another. When his father was a boy Oxford, as Newman said in his famous lectures, was giving no education at all, but when Scott went there it was giving just the kind of education that was best suited to supplement his earlier training. The old apathy had gone and the old abuses had been corrected. In a letter to his brother Arthur he described W. L. Newman who taught him Greek Constitutional History as 'a historical genius',

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Furneaux who taught him Roman history as 'one of those men who without having much original power of their own yet succeed in collecting and giving expression to the views of the best authorities with a clearness and epigrammatic force most serviceable both to the understanding and the memory'. He learned Political Economy from the famous Bonamy Price, of whom he wrote 'His lectures this term are on Currency about which he has just published a book . . . He does not hesitate to compare the change which he wishes to bring about in this branch of study with the revolution effected in astronomy by Galileo and Kepler . . . He is very amusing and very enthusiastic and I hope very sound.' Another teacher of whom he spoke in later life was Courtenay Ilbert, who had just finished a brilliant academic career at Oxford, and was taking pupils before entering upon a public career of equal distinction.

Scott's father, as we have seen, complained that in his boyhood his æsthetic sense had been starved and that he had grown up deficient in powers of observation. The son escaped this fate. His family living in London enjoyed the usual amenities of their class; his sister's pictures were sometimes hung in exhibitions, and their letters, as also those of Scott himself, contained besides comments on Martineau's sermons and the Colenso case, criticisms of the sketches and paintings of Fripp, Gilbert, and other favourites of the day. Moreover they were great travellers, and his home thus supplied the interests that travel brings. Scott himself made the grand tour before settling down in Manchester, sending home descriptions of Rome and Venice which, without displaying any marked originality or power, show that he made up his mind for himself and that he was never bound by the conventional taste of the time.

After his travels in Italy Scott went to Edinburgh for a six months' apprenticeship on the *Scotsman*, then edited by Alexander Russel. In contact now with the problems of his profession he was sometimes in despair, as he wrote to his mother, about 'the heap of things he had to learn before he could become a competent journalist'. He had formed already the ideals that he tried to follow throughout his career, for he deprecated praise of one of his articles on the ground that it

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only showed 'some smartness' and 'that trick of words which is so often made to atone for lack of thought'. 'Did I look upon a newspaper,' he wrote in another letter, 'as a mere vehicle for ephemeral information and more or less intelligent comment upon political events I think it would destroy my satisfaction in the prospect of a journalistic career.' The Franco-German war, in which his sympathies were with France, and his reason against her, led him to advocate conscription for England; a departure from Scott principles that upset his father. Conscientious objectors, he thought, should be asked to leave or be incarcerated. If on this question he held for a moment opinions very different from those he held later, a letter that he wrote when the Russian Government announced that it would no longer be bound by the Treaty of 1856 which shut Russia out from the Black Sea, would have stood in every syllable as a leader from his pen fifty years later. To his father he wrote in November 1870 :

What do you think about the conduct of Russia? Prussian contempt of treaties and moral obligations of all kinds seems to be spreading. The world is grievously in want of some fresh principle and power to take the place of the worn out principle of the 'balance of power' and the now quite failing and never very effective force of treaty obligations. Some league of nations and code of international law must surely be evolved ere long to bring order into this chaos. In any case protest as we may and ought against the unblushing public immorality of Russia, I suppose we shall not repeat the folly of a Crimean war. We are bound to protect our Indian possessions from all dangers and aggression but in order to do this I trust it is not necessary to bolster up every effete Eastern government whose fall might increase the area of Russian territory.

Scott arrived in Manchester in February 1871, receiving a warm welcome from Peter Allen the manager, Dowman the editor, and Couper the sub-editor.

After a good deal of trouble he found lodgings that suited him in Duncan Street, Higher Broughton. 'I have at last found

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lodgings which seem thoroughly satisfactory, on high ground, semi-detached, sheltered towards the North and East, almost newly furnished, very respectable widowed landlady, three moderate sized but quiet disposed children, bedroom, sitting room, dressing room and bath room only £1 a week, distance from the office two miles.'

He made up his mind early that the Manchester climate was going to suit him, but he did his best to co-operate with its genial air by exercise and a regular life. He played a good deal of tennis—he speaks on one occasion of playing three a side, but the experiment was not a great success—and he walked to and from the office. He found a Corpus friend in Manchester, Sharkey, who was on the staff of the Manchester Grammar School and he soon made new friends, including F. W. Walker, the High Master, and Professor Roscoe. We have an account of his life at this time in a letter written to his brother in April 1871.

I have now pretty much settled down here and I daresay you would like to know something of the ordinary ways of my life in Manchester. When first I came I wrote only one long leader a week and a short leader or 'short' as they call it, on the other days. Now I am writing two full leaders and often more than one 'short' on the other days. Besides this I review the magazines every month and do a little reviewing. Henceforth too I am to exercise a general superintendence over the 'literature' department, not a very extensive one as yet. Thus you see my work is gradually growing and will no doubt go on growing as my own capacities grow. I need scarcely say that I enjoy it all thoroughly and hope to do so more and more as I get it more thoroughly in hand, and am able to find time for definite special studies apart from the ordinary routine of the office. German, political economy and all manner of modern history are the subjects which I have before me. With the other people in the office I am on a very pleasant and friendly footing. . . . Acton takes three leaders a week, Couper one, and there is an odd leader (we have two long ones on Wednesdays) which may fall to the lot of any one of us. My hours are pretty much as follows—I get up at 7.30, breakfast, read the *Guardian*

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thoroughly and walk into town, arriving soon after ten o'clock. I work on all day and walk back for dinner about six o'clock. Read or write in the evening and go to bed soon after ten. This I find not altogether satisfactory and mean to vary by an afternoon ramble once or twice a week. I also intend to join a gymnasium and work there for half an hour or so before going home. Of course I have to accommodate my hours to my work and sometimes don't get home for dinner at all, but patronise the 'Clarence' hard by. I have joined a club but it is of no use to me.

One of Scott's earliest efforts caused Taylor some embarrassment. There had been a discussion at Oxford about the teaching of Physical Science in the course of which a speaker had suggested that Manchester merchants might do well to send their sons to Oxford for a course of study without staying up the whole time to take a degree. Scott, forgetting that within a mile or two of the room where he sat at his desk Owens College was struggling to its feet, wrote with enthusiasm about this project.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Roscoe remonstrated with Taylor in a letter of admirable temper, and Taylor passed on the remonstrance to Scott.

12 QUEEN'S GATE GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON, W.  
*February 24, 1871*

DEAR CHARLES,

You have cast me into a terrible hornet's nest with that article of yours exalting Oxford as a Physical Science school worthy to be supported by Manchester. It gave me a cold shiver when I read it yesterday. This morning I received the enclosed. I feel like a naughty boy. I can only say 'Please Sir, I didn't go for to do it' and that you know is an impossible excuse in our profession the great 'we' being indivisible. Pray do not forget O.C. again. He is an aggressive impudent little fellow and very apt to ask you roughly what you mean if you fail to acknowledge his importance. If the O.C. people answer this article as I have counselled them to do, please ask Acton if he will write a short tending to soften the effect of yours and soothe

<sup>1</sup> A few years later one of the pupils of Owens College was J. J. Thomson, the present Master of Trinity.



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O.C. friends as well as he can. Such work will naturally be better done by a new hand than yours and Acton has tact and delicacy suitable to the occasion.

Yours affectionately,  
J. E. TAYLOR

But this was Scott's only mishap. Taylor was so well pleased with the general capacity he displayed that he decided to give him charge of the paper earlier than he had intended.

On June 25, 1871, Scott wrote to his father :

. . . the other day upon talking to Edward I found he contemplated setting me practically at the head of affairs at the beginning of next year or two years sooner than I had expected. He no doubt would remain, as now, nominally Editor. My courage is equal to my fortunes but as to my knowledge I am more doubtful, and must look about and learn as much as may be. I should prefer that this prospect should not be mentioned outside the family. For some time to come it will be as well I think that my position on the paper should not be patent to the world at large.

At this time he was deeply interested in housing, as we learn from a letter to his father, written shortly before he became editor.

*December 3, [1871]*

I am glad to be able to tell you that the movement for improving the dwellings of the poor in Manchester seems at last to have entered upon [a] course which promises success. We had a meeting last Wednesday at which the Bishop of Manchester was present, we put into its final shape an appeal for assistance to be issued by the Society, and we decided definitely upon the first practical steps to be taken. These are two—to find seven more persons who will subscribe £1,000, and to find a small number of persons, whose names will command confidence, to act as a Board of Directors. Mr Oliver Heywood, Mr Allen, and Edward Taylor will I imagine subscribe £1,000 apiece, and we are determined not to come before the public until we have got £10,000 in hand and a good board of directors as proof positive that the

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movement is substantial and will be carried through. Having reached this point, we intend not merely to distribute our 'appeal'—a course which experience in Salford has shown to be singularly fruitless—but there is to be a personal canvass for subscriptions. Of course there is great difficulty in finding canvassers as everybody is busy and the work is not of a kind commonly relished, so I have offered to give up a week to it exclusively and no doubt others will be found to help. The matter is so important that I feel confident that Edward will condone the temporary neglect of duty of which I shall have to be guilty. I intend to take the week either immediately before or immediately after my Xmas holiday, so that I may not be called upon to break in upon my editorial work just as I am beginning it, which, indeed, might not be practicable. I am anxious also to give promptly as large a subscription as I am able, as I feel confident that the ball once set rolling would gather moss in a city of rich men like Manchester. I should have liked to trench upon my prospective inheritance to the extent of £500, but probably you may think such a sum somewhat excessive. I shall go heart and soul into this movement so far as my other duties will allow me, for of all useful enterprises it seems to me to be the one in which one may hope to do the largest amount of good, both physical and moral, with the smallest risk of incidental harm. It may be that the squalor of our great cities can only be remedied by the action of the State or the municipality, but at least it is well that, as in the case of education, individual effort should first break up the ground.

Scott became editor in January 1872. He was twenty-five, and of the men to whom he had to give orders, some had been on the staff before he was born. Nature had helped him by putting a good deal of authority into his face, and he disguised his youth behind a beard and a stern manner. He soon acquired a reputation for severity which those who only knew him outside the office found it difficult to understand. A young man, serious by nature, responsible for all his dispositions to a vigilant and critical superior, was likely to err on the side of stiffness rather than of laxity. In so far as he

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was strict he treated others as he treated himself. He put the *Guardian* first whether he was giving or asking time or trouble. But the quality of his staff is a significant comment on the spirit that he contrived to create. London could pay higher salaries, and for most people life in London offers greater amenities than life in Manchester. Yet Scott had working under him, in some cases for twenty years, in others for thirty, in others for the whole of their working lives, men whose gifts were such that they had to choose rather than find employment. Scott himself hardly realised what such men gave up, for in his scale of values the purposes that a man was serving and helping in life counted for infinitely more than anything else. He held and practised a religion of thrift and simplicity. When the paper was his own he paid himself a salary for which no paper could have hoped to buy half his experience or wisdom.

Scott soon found that his new duties left him little time for outside interests. He described the difficulties of organising his work in a letter to his father from Blackpool on June 16, 1872.

I need all the vigour I can get for I want to make a great effort to put my life a little more into order. I have always been methodical in my ways of life, but then method at school and college is easy because the work is definite, and some of the most important points in the day are fixed for one. But now that my work consists very largely of a multitude of details which can be done at any time and in any order, or nearly so, and neither the times of eating nor those of sleeping are fixed, now, moreover, that the most important work *must* be done and cannot on any account be left over because not done when it should have been done, method is as much more difficult as it is more essential. I have improved considerably, but it is quite necessary that I should improve much more. As it is the bare daily routine of the office takes up the whole of my time and thoughts. I have none left for general culture, none even for the special culture required by my profession, but little for society and still less for social duties in the larger sense. Of course it is the first duty of

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every man who has special work entrusted to him to do that work as well as he possibly can do it. In my own case too this work is so responsible and so important that a man might well be content to devote himself to it with his whole heart. Nevertheless there is just a corner of my heart which persists in going astray after better houses for poor people and such like eccentricities and till this fragment is satisfied the rest of the organ is likely to remain ill at ease.

After Scott became editor he took to spending summer week-ends at Blackpool where he was able to get quiet lodgings. As Blackpool increased in popularity this became more difficult. In July 1872 he wrote:

This I expect is about the last time I shall come down to Blackpool this summer. The place is getting very full and it was only by a lucky chance that I got rooms this week. I always insist on a front bedroom as these are much the quieter and the lullaby of the sea is delicious, and I greatly dislike the hotels which are always noisy and at this season doubly so. Moreover as I always do a good deal of reading or writing of one sort or another during my two days outing I find a private sitting room essential and this at an hotel is either not to be had at all or only to be had for an extortionate price. During the course of the week in Manchester I have hitherto rarely found time for any reading beyond that which is immediately essential and I have trusted to the week-end for any general reading or preparation for topics which are looming in the near future. Thus this week I am reading up what I can about the Scotch Education Bill—a complex subject which I have hitherto burked—and the Galway Judgment.

In a letter to his mother in July next year he described the growth of amusements at Blackpool. He and his brother, after a delightful day along the shore, paid a call on their way home 'at a strawberry garden which, together with a bowling green, dancing room, croquet ground and swings, constitutes a centre of attraction in this neighbourhood. It is far from being the only one of the kind. Out-door dancing

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goes on at as many as five or six places in and near Black-pool at the same time. I often go and watch it at the Southern pier end. There is one boarded space about eighty yards long and forty broad, half of it covered over. The high wages are producing a wonderful development of popular amusements, which I myself am very glad to see.'

Though he wrote cheerfully at the time, Scott looked back on those early days afterwards with different feelings. Writing in March 1904 to his son Laurence Scott who was working in Ancoats, he regrets that there were no Settlements in his young days. 'Dull and dismal enough it was in lodgings and I used to spend twelve hours a day I remember at the office as a refuge, a mistake, for that is the time I ought to have formed the habit of systematic reading. Only having the whole responsibility of the office thrown on me a year after I got there I naturally took the work hardly and it cost me an illness, almost the only one of my life.'

His sister Catherine wrote to his mother during his first year at the *Guardian*, quoting a description of him by a friend which shows that the work was a strain for him. 'I believe he is much better than he was, but he is so thin and pale, and his eyes so staring; and not only this but his manner is so different—he is as nice as ever—but he seems rather dreamy—there is no *go* about him, and things seem an effort to him.'

Whatever the discomforts of this early life they did not last long, for in 1874 Scott married Rachel, the youngest daughter of John Cook, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of St. Andrews. Rachel Cook was introduced to Scott's sister Catherine in October 1872 by Madame Bodichon, the well-known feminist, who helped to found Girton. 'My dear Katie', she wrote, 'I find that the pretty Miss Cook our student is staying with her mother Mrs Cook at 11 Melcombe Place, Harewood Square, and would like to know neighbours. Will you call on her and propose to be friendly? I will call tell her next week. Miss Cook would help you with the *reading* you could say I proposed she should help as I do certainly.'

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'The pretty Miss Cook', of whom George Eliot said that she was the most beautiful woman that she had ever seen, had gifts of mind as well as grace of body. She was one of the seven original students at the Women's College at Hitchin which afterwards migrated to Cambridge to become Girton. Miss Cook made a great impression on the examiners in the Classical Tripos at Cambridge in 1872. Though she had known no Latin or Greek till within a few months of going to college, she was put into the second class, and it became known that one of her papers on Aristotle had been considered the best that was submitted, although Butcher, famous for his translation of the *Odyssey*, was a competitor. She evidently made a similar impression on the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, for soon after their meeting she was writing reviews in his paper. A letter from Paris in November 1873 thanks her for her 'charming little review' and tells her of a conversation with Gambetta and of 'the hard struggle for life' that Liberty is now having in France. Their friendship soon turned to affection and they were married quietly in London on May 20, 1874. Scott rode up to London for the ceremony from Folkestone, with his brother Lawrence, taking the journey in stages.

Scott had found not only a wife but also a colleague, for Mrs Scott shared his work with him as well as his home. Mrs Ashton, an old friend who was then a nurse in the family, has a vivid recollection of the early days at The Firs.

A messenger came up every evening from the office for years with 'Proof', whether Mr Scott went down or not. Sometimes he (Mr Scott) would go early and return home about 10 o'clock. The messenger would follow and wait until all was ready for the *Manchester Guardian*. Mrs Scott used to help, lying on the drawing room sofa and Mr S. in his study, but trotting in and out of the drawing room at intervals. When anything special was on and Mrs Scott was well enough, both went down about 6 o'clock taking with them a can of milk, eggs, rolls and butter, so that they could have a meal down there. Many a time it was 2 o'clock in the morning when they returned. One messenger who came for

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years was called Dick Mitchell (nicknamed Dick the devil). He was never sober but could run faster than any cab horse. He never took a hansom to go back. He ran from The Firs to the *Manchester Guardian* [3 miles] in twenty minutes and was well known to all the policemen, etc. Old McGrath was the morning messenger then. An old soldier and very smart in his blue uniform.

The telephone was put in in 1882 when Mr S. first went to The Firs. One of those you had to turn a handle for half an hour at a time. It very often was out of order. Then one of the gardeners or the maids were rushed off with messages to the *Manchester Guardian* until Mr Dean the stationer in Fallowfield had a public telephone installed and we went there instead. When there were any sports at the Fallowfield Athletic Ground the *Evening News* reporters were allowed to use the telephone and so got in first with the scores. The front door was never shut on Saturday afternoons.

When on a long railway journey Mr and Mrs Scott both wrote in the train and at the journey's end I was sent to the nearest Post Office to telegraph the result of their labour. What a flutter those telegrams caused in those out of the way places and how the people wondered who had come to stay in their midst.

The Firs, Fallowfield, where the arrival of Dick Mitchell, drunk but punctual, threw the household into the kind of excitement that was produced by the arrival of the messenger in the Greek play, was not the first home of the Scotts. They lived at The Breeze, Kersal, from 1874 to 1881, during which years their three eldest children were born; Madeline born in 1876, Laurence Prestwich 1877 and John Russell 1879. Edward Taylor, their fourth child, was born at The Firs in 1883. Scott lived at The Firs until his death. Here he found himself in perfect surroundings. The grace and repose of his house were set off by a large garden with noble trees where magpies made their nests, and spreading lawns that often rang with the pleasant echoes of tennis or infant cricket. Manchester, as Charles II said of Godolphin, was never in the way and never out of the way; easy to find but easy to

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forget. Not long after his settling at The Firs Scott transferred to the bicycle the enthusiasm he had formerly given to horsemanship. This became a lifelong devotion. The policemen who were able in the eighties to admire the messenger passing the Manchester cab horses at full speed, with the latest telegrams in his pocket, could now look every night for the editor wheeling himself, with the paper's problems in his head, from Fallowfield to Cross Street. The years passed over him. Scott, who in old days had gone to the office in a silk hat now wore a Trilby, and Manchester which had used horses, now used electricity to carry its citizens to their work. But Scott never put his bicycle aside and these changes only increased his enjoyment of his nightly adventure. When the day's work was over he rode home with bare head whatever the weather. Once a watchman, new to the scene, asked this old man pushing his punctured bicycle in the middle of the night, why he was going home at such an hour, and when Scott answered that he had been kept late at his work, the watchman, looking at his white hair blowing in the wind, displayed a proper indignation at such treatment of old age. It was not until he was over eighty that he yielded to the remonstrances of his friends and kept his bicycle for the daylight.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Mrs Tout of March 20, 1931, Scott then 84 wrote: 'P.S.—In case you hear I had a spill, it's quite true but I am none the worse. I was riding an unaccustomed bicycle and the brakes were differently placed, so, going downhill, I put on the rim brake vigorously by mistake, and of course stopped the machine nearly dead and was pitched off. I have a useful knack of falling without hurting myself.'



## CHAPTER V

### THE NEW MANCHESTER AND THE NEW 'MANCHESTER GUARDIAN'

SCOTT went to Manchester at an interesting moment in its history. Disraeli, speaking at a great meeting in the forties, had described the close connection that had existed in the past between commerce and culture, pointing to Corinth, Venice, Amsterdam, and other cities whose famous traditions bring the two together. It would have needed a born flatterer to put Manchester in this proud category when Disraeli was speaking, for Manchester at that time did not even possess a public library, and so far as the mass of the people were concerned, the life of the town was as bleak and as harsh as the face of its new working-class districts. But Manchester in the seventies was moving fast from its Philistine traditions. The habit of public generosity, so vigorous in the life of the Roman Empire, so widespread in the Middle Ages, but almost lost in the first scramble of the Industrial Revolution for private wealth, had come back into city life. The great agitations of the mid-century, the Chartist Revolt, the struggle for the Repeal of the Corn Laws, the debates on Factory Reform, and the needs of Public Health, had awakened conscience and imagination. In the forties, when Ewart and Brotherton were conducting their campaign in Parliament, Manchester could not support a public library; in the sixties and the seventies, despite the depression that had been caused by the Civil War in America, her rich men raised nearly a quarter of a million to make of John Owens' great benefaction an Institution of which Manchester could be proud. Of this movement the leader was Thomas Ashton, one of the family of cotton spinners that had led the way in tempering the first rigours of the Industrial Revolution, and among his chief supporters were men bearing names so well-known in the history of Manchester as Darbishire,

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Worthington, Barlow, Behrens, Donner, Armitage, Faulkner, and Fielden. Event followed event in rapid succession in her Municipal history. In 1873 the new Owens College was opened : in 1878 the new Town Hall, the Cheetham Library, and the great Free Reference Library in King Street. In 1882 Roscoe gave the first of the Sunday lectures, organised by Mr Charles Rowley and his Ancoats Recreation Committee, which afterwards became a famous institution.

Led and encouraged by citizens inspired by this spirit, Manchester was very fortunate in the men who had come to make Manchester their home. James Fraser, who became Bishop in 1870, known as the citizen Bishop, a man who impressed with his power two such different judges as Gladstone and Huxley, was equally at home presiding over the British Association, acting as umpire in a labour dispute, speaking for a larger and more serious view of the theatre, or attacking university tests in the House of Lords. The leading Nonconformist minister, Alexander Maclaren, was admired as a preacher of exceptional power and as a man of large views of public affairs. Owens College growing into a University drew to Manchester men who would have gained a reputation as teachers and scholars wherever they found themselves—men like Roscoe, Jevons, Adamson, Wilkins, Balfour Stewart, Boyd Dawkins, and A. W. Ward ; while Bryce, Holland, and Dicey came constantly to give public lectures. Manchester Grammar School was under the care first of F. W. Walker, one of the most eminent of the head masters of his age, and then of Samuel Dill, renowned in Manchester and Belfast as a teacher, and admired in a much larger world as a scholar who was also a man of letters.

Rich in men, Manchester was also alive with important movements. The Owens College of the sixties was a struggling institution with few students, young in years, who could only obtain academic status by preparing for the external degrees of the University of London. The agitation for turning this struggling institution into a university engaged professors, professional men, and the leading business men and manufacturers, in a great common effort. This

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movement did not achieve its full success until 1903, but it got half-way in 1880 when a Federal University was established, of which Owens College was for some time the only constituent. Another agitation that drew public-spirited men together was the agitation for improving the higher education of women. In this case also success was gradual. A women's college was established in Brunswick Street in 1877, and the students were examined by members of the teaching staff of Owens College. In 1883 this college was taken over by Owens College, and as the Victoria University, the name of the new Federal University, had decided to grant degrees to women, women were from that time in the same position as men.

Scott, who was interested in the general cause of university reform in Manchester, was thrown after his marriage into this women's agitation. The ardour he had given to housing when first he lived in Manchester was now given to the effort to improve the higher education of women.<sup>1</sup> He spent most of his spare time in canvassing and interviewing the chief citizens of Manchester in support of the proposal to admit women to the lectures at Owens College. This movement received powerful help from members of the staff and Scott was brought into close touch with Adamson, the new Professor of Logic, a man equally distinguished for learning and public spirit. Scott devoted a great deal of energy to this cause, and helped also in different ways the new High School for Girls which was just entering on its successful career.<sup>2</sup> Thus he found himself working with men and women whom he liked, for purposes that had acquired a new importance in his eyes.

The development of this university society was most important for Scott, because it brought him congenial friends.

<sup>1</sup> It happened appropriately that the last long leader that Scott wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* was in support of an appeal for funds for Girton on November 1, 1930. He began his leader with a glance at the Hitchin pioneers.

<sup>2</sup> He was one of the Founders of the Withington Girls School in 1890 and was Chairman of the Council for 40 years, keeping this office after he had resigned every other. He presided at a Governors' meeting three weeks before his death.

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To a man of his tastes and interests, it was a piece of extraordinary good luck to be thrown among men like Adamson, Bryce, Ward, Jevons, Munro, Roscoe, Tout,<sup>1</sup> Boyd Dawkins, Alexander, Conway, and other professors who were working side by side with him for common purposes. At this time he found in Manchester men who remained his friends for life, whether they stayed in Manchester or moved elsewhere; among them Dill, Bryce, and not least A. W. Ward, a man with unusual gifts of leadership who left the mark of his constructive power and stimulating personality on two Universities. Ward was allied not only by strong affection, but by the tie that Cicero held to be so strong in friendship: *idem sentire de republicâ*. Throughout their lives the two men exchanged frequent letters. For the rest of his life Scott found himself in a town which, so far as the fame of its university teachers were concerned, could rival Oxford, Cambridge, and London.<sup>2</sup>

Scott also found a friend in a world that had hitherto been strange to him. The arts and graces were returning, if a little shyly, to social life in Manchester. The decoration of the new Town Hall raised questions that caused anxious debate at the City Council. At one moment there was an ominous suggestion that Manchester should go to some foreign country to find an artist to paint her history. When this had been abandoned it was at first proposed to employ five artists, Madox Brown, Frederick Shields, Watts, Poynter, and Leighton. Then it was decided to employ two artists, Shields and Brown, each of them to contribute six frescoes. In the end Shields gave up his commission and the whole series was painted by Madox Brown. The choice of subjects was left to a committee of the City Council, an arrangement that

<sup>1</sup> Scott wrote on October 23, 1929, to Mrs Tout on Tout's death: 'He has done beautiful work in the help and affection he gave to a host of pupils whose lives would be the better for his, and he lived to complete a great and lasting work of historical exposition which for years to come will speak of his quality and raise the level of a great subject.' Mrs Tout remained one of Scott's closest friends to the end of his life.

<sup>2</sup> Scott was appointed a member of the Court of Owens College in April 1881, and he remained a member of that Court and subsequently of the University Court till his death. He was a member of the Council of Owens College from 1890 to 1898 and of the University Council from 1915 to 1928.

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displeased Brown who had no very high opinion of his employers, though others might think that it was not unreasonable. Brown regretted that he was thus deprived of the opportunity that he sought of putting the scene of Peterloo into paint.

Scott, who had been given a new interest in art by his marriage, formed a friendship with Madox Brown whom he asked to make a portrait of his daughter Madeline. This led to their association in another enterprise. Scott and Mr Charles Rowley had secured for a textile exhibition in the early eighties, which became afterwards a permanent part of the Art Gallery, a collection made by the famous expert de Bock. The two were entrusted with the task of choosing the tints for the walls of the rooms in which the collection was housed. They fell back on Brown. On August 1st, 1883, Scott wrote to his wife: 'We settled on a fine powerful colour which I hope will not prove too much for the nerves of the Art Gallery Committee.' This hope was disappointed, for next day he wrote that the City Surveyor could not stomach it. The ensuing quarrels over green and yellow recalled the violence of the Byzantine circus, and poor Scott wrote on August 21st, 'These textiles are the devil.' But he won his battle and he wrote in triumph to his wife. The full effect of the new colour he described as stunning, referring, as we must hope and may believe, rather to his own admiration than to the bewilderment of the City Councillors. He had his hands full with other tasks. The business of labelling, sorting, and displaying the exhibits seem to have taken all his spare time for several weeks, and at one time he talked of spending the night at the Town Hall. However, everything comes to an end, and the end in this case was a grand ceremony with the opening of the City Art Gallery by Lord Carlingford, President of the Council in Gladstone's Government, of which Scott gave an amusing description to his wife.

*September 2, 1883*

... The afternoon function was rather fun. We all met in the Town Hall at 2.30, the Art Gallery Committee with the Mayor and Lord Carlingford in one room, and the rest of



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the Corporation with other invited guests in another. Lord Carlingford was introduced to several of us and I had a few words with him. Then a procession was formed, three by three, each member of the Committee forming a centre for a guest on either hand, and so with our line guarded by police, with an admiring multitude, and the ringing of the Town Hall bells we marched solemnly from the main entrance of the Town Hall to the Art Gallery. I had Mr Brown and Mr James Worthington for companions, and we were considerably entertained by the novelty of our position. We felt for all the world like 'Odd-fellows' or Whit Monday school children, and only needed a few banners or scarves to make the resemblance complete. After reaching the Art Gallery the procession walked first round the lower floor, and became promptly and hopelessly entangled among the Bock screens. We recovered ourselves a little in the broader spaces of the sculpture rooms, and there Sir Philip Owen called me up to explain to Lord Carlingford the share which his department had had in bringing together our various collections. After that we went upstairs and Lord Carlingford declared the galleries open in a brief speech which I did not hear, having been buttonholed by poor Tom Worthington who was almost crying with vexation at having been altogether left out in the cold. I comforted him as far as I could by abusing the ignorance and stupidity of the Corporation people, and assuring him that on *our* side of the Committee there was only one feeling as to the way in which he and other old and active members of our body had been treated.

In the evening the same qualities, I am sorry to say, were not less conspicuous. Newton of the British Museum, who is a most distinguished official and a C.B., Holman Hunt who was the only great artist, and Sidney Colvin, the only distinguished art critic who accepted our invitation were all placed *anywhere*. Newton sat next but one to me at a side table and below Cundall, the veriest understrapper of South Kensington who had come down in charge of our loan pottery. Holman Hunt was placed between Cundall and old Alderman Goldschmidt who passed a note to his opposite neighbour with



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the intelligent interrogatory 'Who or what is Mr Holman Hunt?' Colvin was a shade better off as he would have had Mr Taylor on one side of him only that Mr Taylor did not come. As it was he had nobody but Pooley and an empty chair. Afterwards when we went into the main hall for the speeches Newton would have been left among the promiscuous audience if Colvin had not noticed him, when I, of course, brought him up to the platform. . . . Barring these *contretemps* all went off well, though the speeches were not very brilliant, and the counter-attractions of supper, which had been rashly provided at the same time, exercised a highly disturbing influence. Towards the close of Agnew's longwinded speech there were, I am sorry to say, open signs of impatience, and it needed all Sir Philip Cunliffe-Owen's tremendous oratorical manner to hold the audience for a few minutes longer. Then nothing could keep them and there was a general stampede in which Prinsep's speech could not be attempted and I heard nothing even of a vote of thanks to the Mayor.

Some later letters show that Brown and Scott kept in close touch, and that Brown contributed to the columns of the *Guardian*.

In a letter Brown refers to his ruffled relations with the Corporation and speaks of himself as sulky. His troubles, if not on the heroic scale of those that disturbed the peace of Michelangelo when working for the Popes, gave him a good deal of annoyance, and his underlying conviction that his employers took a false view of the place of art in life was strengthened by two unmannerly papers that one of the elected auditors contributed to the *Manchester City News* in the autumn of 1884. The *Manchester Guardian* published a sharp reply on October 20th.

'We have, us three at home', wrote Brown the next day, 'just been reading your vigorous and generous defence of me in your paper and I don't know how to thank you enough for it. The attack was not one that I could have taken notice of myself; your article more than sets things right and will do me great good in more places than Manchester.'

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If Scott's choice of colour for the textile exhibition had startled the City authorities, he had not apparently lost their confidence, as we learn from two resolutions passed at a meeting of the Art Gallery Committee on the 11th December, 1884.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Milne and Messrs. Scott and Gillebrand be appointed a Sub-Committee to arrange and supervise the various matters connected with the Lower Rooms and Museum Collection during the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: That the Chairman of the Art Sub-Committee (Mr. W. A. Turner), Alderman Hopkinson (Chairman of the General Committee), and Mr. C. P. Scott be requested to call and view the works by the late Wm. Blake (when they are in Manchester) with a view to the purchase of the same, or a portion thereof, for the Permanent Collection.

JOS. HERON,  
Town Clerk.

As a result of this commission, the Committee reported next year the purchase of eighteen of Blake's portrait sketches for £126.

A letter that Scott wrote in February 1885 to his wife, who was away from home, described an important event in the history of Manchester.

I have had rather a day of it to-day, a meeting of the Hulme Trust at 2 o'clock . . . and then meeting of Art Committee and Sub-committee from 2.15 to 5 o'clock. However I got the electric lighting put in a fair way, and my Palgrave pots purchase sanctioned, and we have bought Madox Brown's splendid great picture *Work* for £400. It is about ten times as big as the sketch of the Wycliffe fresco and has almost as many figures, including portraits of Carlyle and F. D. Maurice! So that is not a bad afternoon's work. Then I concluded that I ought to write the leader again about the terrible news of the fall of Khartoum. . . .

Writing to Scott in 1890, Brown spoke of the years he spent on the work at the Town Hall as among the happiest of his life.

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The development of these new interests brought Scott friendships and duties that he liked, but they were more important for their influence on the paper, for this new world gave him at once an opportunity and a purpose. He found himself in a community with a growing mind, with a new interest and excitement about education, literature, the arts, and all the influences that bring men and women together on a higher plane than that of common convenience and material interest. Manchester was a great centre of commerce, but her University and her Grammar School kept her citizens from forgetting that 'there is a knowledge worth possessing for what it is and not merely for what it does.' The causes that now engaged her best energies were not connected with spreading her trade over the world but with the development of her own resources of taste, mind, and character. This change of interest was helped, of course, by the presence of men of culture from all countries. A cosmopolitan city, Manchester could benefit by the love of music, painting, and literature that rich merchants who made their home there had brought from countries where a feeling for art and grace and the humanities had suffered less damage from the Industrial Revolution.

Scott was thus happily placed, as a man who had written that if he looked upon a newspaper as a mere vehicle for ephemeral information and more or less intelligible comment upon political events, it would destroy his satisfaction in the prospect of a journalist's career. For he was living in a society that asked more from its newspaper than this, and he made it his task to put the ordinary citizen of Manchester in touch with the best minds of the day in every department of life and letters. His success is seen by a simple test, for if you call up the names of the most distinguished writers on any subject in the eighties you will find that the people of Manchester could learn at first hand from their own paper what many of those writers were thinking. This was true of the arts, of science, of theology, of history, and of scholarship. Scott began from the first to enlist the most competent writers. Among men of his own age Saintsbury and A. W. Ward were writing on literature, Dill on scholarship, Mandell Creighton and James Bryce on history, Richard Jefferies on Nature,

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Comyns Carr and Walter Armstrong on art, and Arthur Evans on archaeology. Freeman and Goldwin Smith brought the distinction and authority of an older generation. It has been said of some of Scott's contributors, as of York Powell, that they gave to the *Guardian* what was meant for mankind.

Scott found it easier and easier to enlist men of distinction and independence, for his paper conducted in this spirit attracted men who had something to say, since they knew that they would be allowed to say it, and that the *Guardian* was a paper in which any man would be proud to see his name or his work. Scott made it one of his special cares to see that his readers could learn all that was to be discovered by highly skilled observers about large problems in any part of the world. In 1900, when he sent Vaughan Nash to India, Curzon, then Viceroy, wrote that the *Manchester Guardian* was the first great English newspaper to take up the cause of the Indian Famine. A letter that Scott wrote to J. M. Synge, when Synge was about to make a tour of some of the Irish districts, shows how he regarded the place of the special correspondent.<sup>1</sup>

May 26, 1905

I should like you to take time to do the thing comfortably and thoroughly—three weeks to a month would seem a quite reasonable time, working at the thing in the way you would, intimately, and trying to give the reader a sympathetic understanding of the people and the way their life is lived, and to let the political lesson emerge out of that. Certainly I should wish you to deal with the problem independently and entirely in your own manner.

An amusing letter from W.T. Stead, who went to The Hague

<sup>1</sup> The Special Correspondents who served the *Guardian* at different times included many distinguished scholars and men of letters, from Arthur Evans in the seventies to Lowes Dickinson and Arnold Toynbee fifty years later. When Scott invited J. B. Atkins, then on his staff, to act as special correspondent in the Boer War, Atkins told him that his views on the War were not in complete agreement with those of the paper, but Scott replied that he trusted him to act as a truthful observer and that this was the quality he looked for in a correspondent. With this assurance Atkins accepted the commission.

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as correspondent of the *Guardian*, shows that one of his correspondents objected to his strict views about the English language.

June 24, 1899

... In my telegram last night I used the words 'hankey-pankey' and 'on the sly', and I expect to see them cut out of my telegram when the paper reaches me. I telegraphed another day the word 'disgruntle' in reference to Germany, and that was cut out. I do not object to such mutilations, as I regard them as a sacrifice of force and effectiveness to your theory of the necessity of preventing the English language being reinforced by words which have not received a classic stamp; but I *do* object very strongly to such mutilation as took place in my telegram the other day when I spoke of the article in the *Standard* of last Monday as 'infamous'. 'Infamous' is a good English word, and I will defy your sub-editor, if he hunted through the dictionary, to find any combination of letters which more accurately describes the character of the article in question. . . .

Scott was helped very considerably in his task by an appointment that he made to the staff in 1879. Of all the men who served on the *Guardian* under Scott, three stand out for the impression they made on its character: W. T. Arnold, C. E. Montague, and L. T. Hobhouse. Of these the first in time was W. T. Arnold. Scott met him soon after he had taken his degree. Arnold, like Montague after him, had fallen into the second class in Greats, but he had already begun to make a name as a student of the provincial government of the Roman Empire. Scott invited him to join the staff, and he came to Manchester in 1879, remaining there until he was disabled by illness nearly twenty years later. It would have been difficult to find a man better fitted to make a paper take its proper place in the intellectual and imaginative life of a great society. His alert and picturesque mind, always finding some new interest in life, some new association in history, some new significance in art, gave a special quality to his outlook on the affairs, the interests, the problems, and the daily life of a great city.

A good illustration of the change that was effected under

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Scott's leadership is seen in the treatment of the theatre. It is difficult to-day to picture the plight of the theatre in the seventies: the strength of the widespread conviction that it was disreputable or frivolous, serving no purpose in the life of the emotions or in the life of the intellect. 'Few highly educated men now think it worth while to go to see any play,' wrote Kingsley in 1873, "and that exactly for the same reasons as the Puritans put forward; and still fewer highly educated men think it worth while to write plays; finding that since the grosser excitements of the imagination have become forbidden themes, there is really very little to write about.' Bishop Fraser protested against this view at a meeting in Manchester in 1874, in a speech deploring the poor quality of almost all the plays produced for the people of Manchester, and demanding the more serious use of drama. We have a picture of the earlier arrangements of the *Manchester Guardian* in a letter Scott wrote to his sister in 1871, in which he said that he thought of making himself dramatic critic. 'Our head reporter does the work now but very badly. He is a somewhat dour little dissenter, and his heart is not in his work. He handled Southern and a new play of Byron in such a way the other day that I shall be compelled to write a second notice.' The head reporter, whose heart was not in his work, was succeeded in the eighties by critics who aimed in Arnold's words at keeping their taste fine, clear, and steady, and their sympathies generous. The first of them was A. W. Ward. From this time anybody who brought a good play to Manchester, or anybody who tried to raise the standard of acting and the intelligence of the theatre, could count on the judgment of a brilliant man of letters.<sup>1</sup> A little volume called *The Manchester Stage*, published in 1900, has preserved some of the work of the four men who discussed the theatre in the pages of the *Guardian* between 1880 and 1900. Their names are enough to show that

<sup>1</sup> Manchester was prepared for these serious studies by a series of Shakespeare revivals, amusingly described by Mr A. N. Monkhouse in a paper which he read to the English Association on the Theatre in Manchester. Mr Flanagan, who introduced real deer and a live bear in his production of *As You Like It* and *A Winter's Tale*, was received with wild enthusiasm by the audience, some of whom believed that they had Shakespeare before them.

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Manchester was as well off as London: W. T. Arnold, Oliver Elton, C. E. Montague, and A. N. Monkhouse. The change which came over the theatre in England before the Great War, its restoration to the place it occupied in the days when a man who had something to say thought the theatre no bad place in which to say it, was partly due to the steady work done by these men and by Mr James Agate, who succeeded them, in educating the public taste and preparing an audience for dramatists like Shaw, Barker, Galsworthy, Bennett, Brighouse, Drinkwater, and St John Ervine.

Scott asked of the men who wrote on affairs day by day or night by night the same care and thoroughness that he expected from the writer on drama or music. Newman, in his lectures on the Idea of a University, had an amusing sketch of the journalist, whom he compared to the man who entertains at a dinner party or on a platform. 'As the great man's guest must produce his good stories or songs at the evening banquet, as the platform orator exhibits his telling facts at midday, so the journalist lies under the stern obligation of extemporising his lucid views, leading ideas, and nutshell truths for the breakfast table'. Scott would not admit that a journalist need be superficial. His judgment, if it is given at short notice, is not for that reason based on short views. Obviously a man cannot make a good journalist unless he has the gift of putting on paper what is in his mind while the sands are running down the hour glass; he must be able to pounce quickly on the word or illustration that will best serve his argument. The sense of crisis acts differently on different men, scattering the wits of some, collecting those of others. A man of the first type, however brilliant his other gifts, is out of place in a newspaper office, where a writer must be ready for any emergency. But as a rule the subject that arises at six o'clock in the evening does not come before the well-trained journalist for the first time. The journalist is like the clerk in a Civil Service department, a man whose business it is to know all about this or that problem. For the most part men writing from day to day are writing on questions that they have been able to study. Scott substituted the expert for the amateur, and, in giving to his readers something on every subject that would interest men and

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women of all-round culture, he also gave them day by day the judgment of men who had mastered the particular subject on which they were writing. In this he had great help from Arnold. Nobody could be much in the society of Montague, whose modesty took the form of declaring himself indebted to his friend for everything that others admired in his own power and range as a journalist, without seeing that Arnold had been a great force in building up this new tradition of the trained and expert staff. Scott himself put the truth when, in writing to Montague in 1925, he said that he and Arnold had established the tradition of quality on the paper.

When Scott was made an Honorary Fellow of Corpus in 1923, Sir Michael Sadler wrote to him :

... Is there any distinction more delightful than this? And in your case nothing could be more appropriate. You have made the *Manchester Guardian* a University, and through it have given scores of 'Oxford' men membership of the craft of writers. I suppose no living man has refused more honours and titles than you have. It is pleasant to think that the right thing has come at last.

Sir Michael Sadler's phrase is an exact description of the spirit in which Scott collected and regarded his staff from start to finish.<sup>1</sup>

Scott's immense achievement in making the *Manchester Guardian* a paper for the reader of all-round culture could not have been accomplished had he not been fortunate in the man who shared with him the control of the *Manchester Guardian*. Taylor and Scott were fundamentally in agreement. They had the same idea of public duty, the same ambitions for their newspaper, the same sympathy with the new spirit in the life of

<sup>1</sup> Scott had a great respect for academic standards and a special attachment to his own University. His chief leader writers had generally taken Greats (six of them a First Class: Hobhouse, Sidebotham, Laurence Scott, Ensor, Crozier, Ivor Brown). For many years Cambridge only contributed one important member to his staff, J. B. Atkins who took a leading part in reorganising and strengthening the London office, introducing R. H. Gretton and James Bone.



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Manchester. Taylor had himself played an important part in the development of that spirit. He was one of the founders, in 1863, of the Manchester Education Aid Society, a body which paid the fees for poor parents. He was from the first one of the most powerful supporters of Owens College, and at the time of its reconstruction in 1870 he was one of the trustees. A great collector, he enriched the Whitworth Park Gallery with some of the best work of the early-English water-colour school. That the two men had the same outlook on the place and the responsibility of the journalist in public life was clear from a letter Taylor wrote to Scott in 1895. Rosebery had offered Taylor a baronetcy which Taylor had refused. He told Scott of this offer, adding 'I hope you will think I have done rightly,' and on receiving Scott's answer he wrote again, 'Personally a title would have been to me an incumbrance and a source of vexation. As it is, rightly or wrongly, I feel some sense of pride that the *Guardian* has never taken any favour from any of the powers that be. To the best of my belief no one connected with it ever asked or received any favour from Government or any other public authority. Had I taken a title my soul would have seemed to put on livery.' That last sentence might have been written by Scott.<sup>1</sup>

For the greater part of their lives Scott and Taylor were working in close agreement. Taylor was hardly ever in Manchester, for he lived a great deal abroad and his home was in London. He wrote constantly, and his letters showed that he took the warmest interest in the day to day affairs of the paper. Every new writer was carefully watched and all the details of administration, new features, possible improvements, questions of holidays and salaries, received his attention. That Taylor was a man of judgment is shown by his quickness to detect the worth not only of Arnold, Montague, and Hobhouse, but of

<sup>1</sup> A note in Scott's Diary in April 1916 throws an interesting light on this incident. Scott called on Rosebery in April 1916 and in his note about this visit he wrote: 'I had not spoken to him since 1903 [the date is wrong, of course, it should be 1895] when he sent for me to offer me "an honour" and when I said I wanted none, offered a baronetcy to Mr Taylor which he also declined.'

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two younger recruits who were destined to become pillars of the paper.<sup>1</sup>

The partnership between Taylor and Scott lasted thirty-four years. Taylor died in 1905. Towards the end of his life his friendship with Scott was clouded, and the relations of the two men suffered some loss of mutual confidence. Fortunately that confidence had been unbroken for nearly thirty years. In the first half of those thirty years the *Manchester Guardian* had become a paper that gave to the educated public of Manchester all that *The Times* gave to the educated people of London. In the second half it became, in Mr. Garvin's words, a paper that the whole world had to reckon with.

<sup>1</sup> H. Sidebotham, who came to the paper in 1895, straight from Oxford, where he had been Craven Scholar and Gaisford Prizeman, remained on the staff till 1918. He gained a great reputation outside the office as a critic first of foreign politics and then of strategy, and inside the office as a journalist who gave to the service of his paper not only a brilliant pen but a versatile mind full of initiative and ideas. W. P. Crozier (now editor) joined the staff in 1903, after taking two firsts at Oxford, and soon made his mark by day-to-day criticism of statistics and arguments in the Tariff Reform controversy.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TURN TO THE LEFT

WHEN Scott joined the *Manchester Guardian* it was not a Radical paper. The *Examiner* was Radical and the *Guardian* Whig. This suited him, for Scott as a young man was cautious and slow going. In one of his earliest letters from Manchester he wrote (February 1871): 'I have decided to be put up along with Mr Allen for the Reform Club. This club is at present very much in the hands of the extreme Radical party—the *Examiner* party in fact—who chiefly got it up. It is represented to me as not agreeable or desirable in any way from a strictly social point of view, but it is a political centre and I should not like not to have the entry at election times.'

Scott's temper at the time is illustrated by the letter that he wrote as a young man of twenty-five on the speech Gladstone, then over sixty, made on the Ballot in 1870.

I have just read Mr Gladstone's speech on the Ballot Bill. The arguments for the further extension of the suffrage on the ground of consistency are most amazing. I should have thought that all but the merest theorists and visionaries would have admitted that a right to the suffrage can only be based upon a prospective advantage from its exercise to the nation at large, and that those in every case ought to govern who are likely to govern best—that is, most completely in the interest of the nation at large. Consistency then could constrain us to extend the franchise further only after it had been shown that a further extension would be likely to produce a better governing body—and that I fancy it would not be easy to show. We have got to learn the worth of the body we have now got.

Another good illustration is the article he wrote on the debate on Jacob Bright's Bill for Women's Suffrage in 1871.

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He put the case for enfranchisement excellently but ended with a plea for delay. He argued that women had had so little experience of public affairs, that they and their higher education had been so long neglected, that they were apt to be either indifferent or to run to extremes.

There is no partisan like a woman, and among women are to be found the strongest supporters of every new crochets, the most ardent enthusiasts of every ephemeral emotion which is stirred in the public mind. . . . No better example of the worst consequences that may be looked for from the increased participation of women in public affairs could be found than in the agitation against the Contagious Diseases Acts of which women are the very heart and soul. We can call to mind no instance in which the real bearings of a most important question have been so assiduously misrepresented, in which more reckless efforts have been made to excite prejudice and appeal to unreasoning passion, or in which a greater degree of political unscrupulousness has been shown in the means adopted to influence legislation. . . . A sound education and a larger experience of life would go far to redress the balance, at present so ill adjusted, between reason and emotion. It becomes, then, a most serious question whether we ought not to wait a while, and do in this case what we failed to do in a previous case—educate our rulers before we allow them to rule.

Take again his discussion of disestablishment.

A great organisation which has done more than can be calculated to elevate and to console the people of many generations, is to be torn up by the roots from the basis on which hitherto it has rested, and to be transformed into we know not what. This is a change which it would be folly to bring about rashly, and before we advocate it we are bound to consider carefully whether an institution which has shown so great a capacity for development may not yet adapt itself to the needs of our time, or whether on the contrary the evil which belongs to it is ingrained and knows no remedy but the knife.

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The language of the Radical Progressives represented by Morley and Chamberlain was very different. 'The Church is an organisation of privilege, and the alliance between parson and publican, Bible and beer, which is always talked about at the period of a General Election is something more than a phrase and is not the alliterative invention of the malignant Radical.'<sup>1</sup>

Of a project thrown out by the Professor of International Law at Edinburgh for a Congress of all the nations, which was to decide on all issues and enforce its decision by war, he wrote: 'Building castles in the air is at all times unprofitable, and when it distracts us from real problems and pressing business it is criminal.'

His attitude to the new Radicalism is well illustrated by the comments made in the *Manchester Guardian* on Chamberlain's inclusion in the Cabinet in 1880.

Mr Chamberlain has great business abilities and industry, and if he has neither the political culture nor the party standing of Sir Charles Dilke, he perhaps from his very limitations is a truer representative of a somewhat narrow but energetic and aspiring political school. He has many of the qualities of a successful administrator, and it will be surprising if the experience of power, and the admission to the intimate counsels of men vastly more versed in affairs does not have upon him both a sobering and stimulating effect.

The *Manchester Guardian* at that time inclined rather to the Whig opinions of Hartington than to the Radical opinions of Chamberlain.

If Scott had died in 1880 he would have accomplished his first aim of making the *Manchester Guardian* a paper worth the attention of all men and women of serious culture, but his paper would not have been known as a leader of great causes or an active combatant on great issues. The *Manchester Guardian* was less daring than the *Examiner*, and the comments offered in its columns on men and politics reflected a Liberalism that was critical, cool, and circumspect. In the

<sup>1</sup> Hirst: *Early Life and Letters of John Morley*, Vol. II, p. 287.

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eighties a remarkable thing happened. During those years, thrown into a panic by such names as those of Chamberlain, Bradlaugh, and Parnell, the school to which Scott apparently belonged was in full retreat from the Liberalism that had inspired and supported the great reforms of Gladstone's first Government. You may say that if you talked to the first educated man you met in the street in the seventies, it was as likely as not that you would find him to be a Liberal. In the eighties you would be wise to assume that he was a Conservative. The *Manchester Guardian* might have been expected to follow this movement to the right. Precisely the opposite happened. The events that drove so many men of the centre and some notable figures of the left to the right, drove the *Manchester Guardian* from the centre to the left. Between 1886 and the end of the century the *Guardian* established itself as the leading organ of the new spirit and the new ideas.

The events of 1885 had thrown politics into extraordinary confusion. In the summer Gladstone's Government, after passing from disaster to disaster, from Majuba to Khartoum, had ended its unhappy and bewildered life in a difference over Ireland. Chamberlain wanted to give Ireland local government with a central board in Dublin, and Gladstone supported him. The majority of the Government was hostile. With this discord fresh and raw, the Government fell on a vote on the Budget in which Conservatives and Parnellites combined, and a number of dissatisfied Liberals walked out. Salisbury formed a Cabinet, and made what looked like a very significant appointment. He chose Lord Carnarvon as Viceroy of Ireland. Six months earlier Carnarvon had written to Salisbury: 'Our best and almost only hope is to come to some fair and reasonable arrangement for Home Rule.' At the same time Randolph Churchill, Hicks-Beach, and other leading Unionists joined with the Parnellites in the House of Commons in censuring the administration of Spencer, late Liberal Viceroy, as harsh and oppressive. In the autumn Carnarvon, with the knowledge and consent of Salisbury, but without the knowledge of the Cabinet, met Parnell in an empty house. When two men meet under such

conditions, the impressions they carry away often disagree. That happened in this case. Carnarvon thought he had committed himself and his Government to nothing, but Parnell judged from Carnarvon's temper and from the tactics adopted by Conservatives in Parliament that the Conservative Government was ready to give Ireland much more than Chamberlain had suggested. Consequently he called on all Irish voters to support the Conservatives at the polls, and at the General Election of December 1885, relations between Irish and Radicals in the English constituencies were very bitter. At the election the towns voted Conservative resenting the foreign blunders of the Government, but the new country electorate voted Liberal in gratitude for its enfranchisement. The Liberal majority over the Conservatives was exactly equal to the Parnellite vote in the new House of Commons.

Up to this point the chief domestic problem of the Liberal party had been the quarrel between Chamberlain and Hartington. This now passed into the background, for the Irish question rapidly assumed a dominating importance. Within twelve months it was to raise so fierce an issue that Salisbury said to the Queen that England was torn in two by a question that almost threatened her existence. Gladstone sought to avoid this strain by offering to support Salisbury if he would try to solve the problem by constitutional reform, but his offer was rejected. For Liberals the chief domestic problem of the party, which had hitherto been the problem of the divergence of Chamberlain and Hartington on social reform, was now that of the divergence of Gladstone from Hartington and Chamberlain on Irish Reform. In the spring Gladstone and Chamberlain had been on one side, and Hartington on the other, when the Cabinet had divided on the Chamberlain scheme for a central board in Dublin. Hartington was still against that and all other reform; Chamberlain was still in favour of his original scheme; Gladstone was moving to larger ideas. The problem was complicated by the silence and aloofness of Gladstone, who seemed to regard himself not as the leader of a party, but as a solitary crusader owing allegiance only to his conscience. His offer to Salisbury had been made without the knowledge of any of his colleagues.

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As Gladstone moved towards Home Rule, Salisbury's Government moved away from it. In January 1886 Carnarvon and Hart Dyke, the Chief Secretary, both resigned, because the Government, after long hesitation, had decided to throw over conciliation and turn to coercion.

On the 1st February, 1886, Salisbury's Government was defeated, and Gladstone became Prime Minister. Hartington and his followers stood out, but Chamberlain took office under him with an understanding that he was not committed by taking office to any particular plan of Home Rule. In the confusion of the time Scott appears to have sounded John Bright, for among his papers is the following letter :

ONE ASH, ROCHDALE

*February 17, 1886*

DEAR MR SCOTT,

I do not quite understand what your friends intend to do, or what you might wish me to do—whether they propose a single paper or a series of papers. Just now, the one question seems to be what is to be done with or for Ireland, and on this matter I am indisposed to write anything. Up to this time I have said nothing and written nothing in public—for to tell you the truth, I am sorely puzzled, and have no well defined idea of what can be done or ought to be attempted. The existence of the Government seems to depend on their attempted solution of this complicated question, and I find myself in the position of not being able with any degree of confidence to offer any advice.

Under this condition of my mind I do not see my way to write anything that is likely to be of service. It is well to teach our people, if we can reach them—but unfortunately they do not care much for political questions except at times of excitement such as arise when an Election is near upon them. I am not sanguine therefore that anything effective can now be done just after a general contest has left opinion in a somewhat listless state.

I do not feel that I have anything special to say, and therefore seem compelled to ask you and those on whose behalf you have written, to forgive me if I am unable to comply with your and their request. I do not write easily



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at any time, and unless my mind is stirred upon some question of interest I seem unable to write anything it may be useful for the public to read.

For the present, therefore, perhaps you will excuse me if my pen remains idle as it has been for some time past.

I was glad to read what you have said on a recent shocking case in which every one concerned seems to have come out with a damaged reputation.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

JOHN BRIGHT

Bright, who was sorely puzzled in February, made up his mind a month later, and the knowledge that he had taken sides against Gladstone had a great influence on Liberal opinion. Decisive events followed in rapid succession. Chamberlain and Trevelyan left Gladstone's Government on March 26.<sup>1</sup> On April 8 Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill, and on June 7th it was defeated on its second reading by 341 votes to 311, ninety Liberal Members voting with Bright, Hartington and Chamberlain.

Out of this confusion there emerged a Liberal party without Chamberlain, committed to Home Rule, but committed also to a forward social policy such as that which Chamberlain had been pressing. In this development the *Manchester Guardian* played a part of the first importance.

When the first hint of Home Rule was dropped, the *Manchester Guardian* displayed the natural caution of Scott's mind, uttering a warning against rash measures taken under the influences of the hour. In the autumn of 1885 it suggested that the Irish Members in the House of Commons might be turned into a Grand Committee, to whom all Irish measures should be referred in the first instance. When Gladstone introduced his Bill, the paper disliked it. On April 9th it argued that by withdrawing all the Irish representatives from Westminster the Bill would repeal the Act of Union.

<sup>1</sup> The important new light thrown on the history of these months in Mr Garvin's biography shows that Chamberlain acted consistently throughout on the Irish problem and it explains his bitter misunderstanding with Parnell.

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The next day the paper explained that it disagreed with Trevelyan and Chamberlain who wanted to give Ireland more modest powers than the Bill gave her: 'But we do desire to retain for Ireland her just position in the political system of the Kingdom.' On the 11th, the Government were praised for trying to give Ireland a qualified independence which should be stable and involve as little friction as possible between the two countries, but they were warned that their plan was not successful. Why not give Ireland twenty-six representatives in proportion to their contribution to common expenditure? On April 14 there was a change of tone. Perhaps it would be enough to offer Ireland representation at Westminster, and not to insist on it if she declined. Next day the new tone was stronger. On April 15 the paper contended that there was no alternative to the Bill. 'We must either take this Bill with amendments, or prepare for the inevitable struggle with the Irish Members and the Irish people.' On May 11 the paper was delighted with an offer from Gladstone to set up a Joint Commission to confer on some of the questions that had been reserved to the Imperial Parliament. 'It will supply a ready means of communication on the matters of common interest between responsible men on both sides. It will keep the English Government in touch with the Irish. . . . We should be disposed indeed to enlarge the scope of this Commission, and to include in it representatives also of the colonies, against whose interests ignorance and inattention in high quarters here have so often told with damaging effect. The scheme is a stroke of genius and should win the approval of all parties.' From this time the *Guardian* was the most powerful supporter of the Bill in the Press. In one leader Chamberlain was told that he and Morley had made the government of Ireland impossible by overthrowing Forster, and that Morley, unlike Chamberlain, had accepted the consequences, whereas Chamberlain had shrunk from them. In another, Chamberlain was told that he was treating a great problem which had its roots deep in history as if it were a problem on the surface, not more important than any other problem of local administration. It is interesting to see from Taylor's letters to Scott that his mind passed through the same

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process as Scott's. For the first few days he was hostile, but he then dropped his opposition and eventually threw himself into the cause with ardour. In the end he felt so strongly on the question that he would have liked, if his health had allowed it, to stand for Parliament at the General Election of 1886.

In this process of conversion to a large scheme it is easy to trace two influences. One is the influence of Arnold's historical sense. This sense had been stimulated by a series of articles that Freeman had contributed to the paper, articles that carried the reader over great tracts of space and time, putting the case for giving Ireland Home Rule, in a form likely to fire the imagination of a historical student. We can see Arnold's hand in the complaint about Chamberlain that he saw the problem as something smaller than it was.<sup>1</sup> The other is the influence of Scott's practical and flexible mind. If Arnold had the sort of mind that throws itself naturally into the origins of a problem, Scott had the sort of mind that turns a problem over to find a remedy. The choice of remedies in this case as in others was limited and defined by events. 'We are in the world like men playing at tables,' said Jeremy Taylor, 'the choice is not in our power, but to play it, is: and when it is fallen we must manage it as we can.' For Scott one fact stood out from all the learning in Freeman's pages, and that fact was Freeman's conclusion: 'Either Ireland must be free or else she must be more thoroughly conquered than ever.' Scott made up his mind that whatever the risks of Home Rule, the evils of the alternative course were greater. We can see his hand in the complaint about Chamberlain that he had overthrown Forster without looking ahead and now drew back from the logical conclusion of his own actions.

The process of conversion that we can watch in the columns of the *Manchester Guardian* was, of course, something deeper than a gradual intellectual enlightenment. It

<sup>1</sup> During the Boer War, Arnold, then an invalid in London, writing to Scott sending his good wishes for his election contest in 1900, criticized Chamberlain in just the same spirit as a politician whose want of knowledge blinded him to important truths.

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was the result less of argument than of the power of a single will over the emotions of the age. Those months revealed better than any others the extent and the character of that power. Gladstone, who with half his mind meditated a retirement like that of Charles the Fifth, turned with the other half to a duty more arduous than the Repeal of the Corn Laws. A leader, in these moods, shrinking on the score of his seventy six years, not from great tasks but from small, hesitating between resignation and revolution, was an embarrassment to his party and a mystery to the nation. Yet Gladstone's instinct was just. He was like a man who could draw the bow of Odysseus, but no other. Looking back on the strain of the last five years, with their bewildered and defeated purposes, his authority lost and his judgment distracted in divided and temporizing counsels, he felt that he could only serve the nation in this new crisis if he could lead its conscience and imagination by his own light, and shake the world of common life once more with the noble thunder of Olympus.

This is what he succeeded in doing under conditions that would have seemed to forbid success. If we could imagine a German statesman carrying half the people of Germany with him in 1886, in demanding that every other question in German politics should be laid aside in order that Germany might make reparation to Poland; if we could imagine such a statesman describing the partition of Poland as it might have been described by an eloquent Pole, using all his power to fire the imagination of the German people with the idea of a generous act of restitution, we could picture to ourselves what Gladstone accomplished. It stands alone as an exploit in the history of nineteenth-century Europe. Gladstone spoke to a democracy that had been awakened by Chamberlain to a sense of its urgent domestic needs; he spoke to nonconformists, with their own grievances, and made them ardent about the wrongs of a neighbour whose religion they dreaded; he spoke to workmen for whom the Irish problem as it existed in Liverpool or Leeds presented unsympathetic aspects of the problem that he sought to interpret *sub specie æternitatis*. Many people

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thought, as Queen Victoria and the Emperor William thought, that the old man who had called down this storm was mad, but they knew well enough that, if he was mad, nearly half of England was under a madman's spell.

The will and power of this old man had turned the drift of politics away from the struggle between the ideas of Chamberlain and those of Hartington, into this new struggle over the treatment of Ireland. This diversion was in one sense a serious misfortune. Chamberlain, the first great municipal reformer, was in closer touch with social problems than any man of his calibre in politics. By his energy, his insight, and his knowledge he had broken down two bad traditions. He had given its proper importance to the problem that had been created for the English people by the rapid and unregulated growth of their towns, perceiving that it was a problem of reconstruction demanding initiative, daring, and imagination. He had also given to the question a new standing in national politics, for until his day no statesman of the first rank had made that question his chief care. The difference between Hartington and Chamberlain was not merely the difference between a man of moderate views and a man of advanced views. It was the difference between a man who regarded public life as a field for his gifts of judgment and foresight, his instinct as an educated man for tolerance, his sense as a gentleman for honourable conduct, and a man who regarded it as a battle with gross and palpable evils seen in the slums of Birmingham, and passionately resented as class injustice. The course of events followed in these momentous months diverted this powerful man for all time from urgent problems of which he had grasped the significance sooner than anybody else.

The party that had lost Chamberlain had thus lost the force on which it seemed to depend for its development as a progressive party. It might have been expected that the Liberal party would have fallen more and more out of touch with the new needs of the nation and made way for a rapid rise of the Labour party. If we glance at the chief events of the ten years that followed the Home Rule speech, we see how rapidly Labour questions were coming to the front.

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There were unemployed riots in London in 1886 and 1887, the great dock strike in 1889, the great mining strike in 1893, the great engineering lock-out in 1897. Keir Hardie first stood for Parliament in 1888: the I.L.P. was founded in 1893. We seemed to be moving towards the kind of class warfare that had raged in the first half of the nineteenth century. The loss of Chamberlain might have been fatal to Liberalism as an active and conciliating influence in this growing bitterness, for Gladstone, who had beaten him, could think of nothing but Ireland.

Liberalism, however, emerged from this struggle with a social policy, and before its fall thirty years later it had put into force new and constructive ideas on the questions of insurance, education, trade boards, unemployment, conditions of labour, and town planning. The new needs of the time, and the new ideas inspired and spread by the Fabians and William Morris, had called into life a new Liberalism, taught and encouraged by men who occupied in the nineties the kind of place that Harrison, Bridges, and Beesly had occupied in the social agitation of the sixties. Among these new forces a special place must be given to H. W. Massingham, whose vivid and dashing personality found for a time a theatre in the *Daily Chronicle*, and to Vaughan Nash, who gave first to that paper and then to two Prime Ministers the aid of his acute judgment and direct knowledge of social problems. But the great days of the *Chronicle* ended in 1899.

In this development the *Manchester Guardian* played a part of signal importance. Its home was in a part of England where the conflict between capital and labour had often been crude and bitter. If we want to realize the importance of the *Manchester Guardian* in this connexion, we have only to ask ourselves what the history of Liberalism would have been if the *Manchester Guardian* had taken sides against the miners in 1893, against the engineers in 1897, and against the rising ambitions of labour both in industry and politics. No student of the history of that time would deny that the social life of the north of England and the temper of English politics escaped a great deal of bitterness and rancour because the editor of the *Manchester*

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*Guardian* determined to put the case for new and generous ideas before his public without asking himself how that public would take it.

For this purpose, as for others, Scott was fortunate in his staff. Arnold was a historian, Montague an artist, Hobhouse a philosopher, but they all held the same view of the truth that Liberalism had to teach about the new problems. At the time of the dock strike in 1889, Arnold was the chief leader writer; during the miners' dispute in 1893 (the miners were resisting a 25 per cent reduction in wages) Montague wrote on that subject; Hobhouse, soon after joining the staff of the paper, found himself defending night after night the engineers, whose protracted struggle for shorter hours and some trade union rights ended in the defeat of 1897.

Two passages in Montague's articles on the miners' dispute show how completely the paper had thrown over the traditions and spirit of *laissez faire*. 'The idea that wages, in other words the living, the comfort, and the civilisation of the great mass of men is to be the one elastic and squeezable thing in a business, has got to go.' When the Rosebery settlement was announced he wrote: 'In short, though not embodied in the terms of settlement, the principle of a living wage has made such progress during the lock-out and the strike which at first accompanied it, that it cannot but influence in a greater or less degree all future adjustments of wages, and as far as it goes this is thoroughly satisfactory. But perhaps the most pre-eminently satisfactory thing about the settlement is the excellent precedent created for useful future intervention by Government in similar cases. There is an old superstition that these are matters with which Government has no business to interfere. But that superstition rests on a strange conception of Government. . . . Almost without protest the present Government has broken with the bad tradition of non-interference. It is an admirable amendment of public policy, and the Liberal Government is most fortunate in the brilliant success that has attended the initiation of the new era.'

The engineering dispute, which broke out in July 1897, was not less bitter than the dispute of 1893 in the coalfields,

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and it lasted eight months. The men suffered a severe defeat. They had to withdraw their demand for a forty-eight hour week, to promise to abstain from 'interfering with the management' and to give the employers a freer hand in the use of labour and the methods of payment. Hobhouse, who had just joined the paper, followed the struggle with keen sympathy day by day. As a young don at Oxford he had written a book on the Labour Movement, dedicated to Haldane, and he was naturally interested and excited to find himself in close touch with a labour struggle, raising large questions of principle as well as smaller questions of tactics. He wrote no less than forty-five articles, most of them of course treating the detailed issues that became important as the struggle proceeded. When the struggle was over he discussed its larger significance.

*January 29, 1898*

. . . At a comparatively early stage of the dispute, Colonel Dyer avowed that the policy of the employers was framed on the American model. Now the United States is no doubt the land of political democracy, but it is also the home of an oligarchy of wealth, which has learnt how to put representative institutions to uses of its own, and which is in reality the dominant force in the political and social life of the country. Though we are glad to be behind America in this respect, we can hardly fail to recognise a parallel at home in the immense and increasing political influence wielded by certain great interests. In short, the power of organised capital is the standing danger of democracy, and the history of the engineering dispute marks a notable extension of that power in a new direction. Fortunately, to save us from pessimistic conclusions, the federated employers met with resistance stubborn enough to prove that in this country, at any rate, the workmen are not easily to be deprived of the position that they have won. When the worst has been said of the mistakes of the men and the defects of their organisation, it remains only to admire the pluck with which they have fought a battle which was really lost more than three months ago, and has been



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half-won again since that time. The engineers have borne the brunt of an attack which in reality threatened the whole trade union world. They have borne it so well that it is not likely to be carried further yet awhile. . . .

'There is an old superstition that these are matters with which Government has no business to interfere.' 'The power of organised capital is the standing danger of democracy.' These two sentences, written about the two chief industrial conflicts of the nineties, show how boldly the *Manchester Guardian* had broken with the traditions of *laissez faire* Liberalism. They explain much that surprises the foreign observer, who notes that in England Liberalism survived down to the war as a dominant constructive force, and survived even later as a powerful intellectual force on the side of progress.

Scott used to lament that he had never made himself an expert on social and economic questions. He was anxious that his sons should have the equipment that he lacked. After Hobhouse left the staff in Manchester in order to pursue his philosophy, his place was taken by Mr R. C. K. Ensor who had just come down from Oxford after a brilliant career. When Mr Ensor left, also drawn away to London, Scott meant to assign his special work as leader writer on labour problems to his eldest son, Laurence. Laurence Scott had followed in his father's footsteps at Oxford, where he had been an exhibitor of his father's college and had come down with a first in Greats. He had not inherited his father's taste in politics, being rather artistic and literary in his natural bent, and showing in this field unmistakable promise. His father wrote to him about taking over Mr Ensor's work :

*December 13, 1903*

. . . The sort of indifference to what are called politics of which you are conscious is natural enough with your temper, which demands at all points contact with reality. Not having been called on to write about them or, apart from this, had time to follow them closely and get beneath the surface with them, I don't wonder that you have failed to be interested

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in them. For similar reasons no doubt social problems haven't laid much hold on you. The remedy seems to be to work at these things, and come to grips with them as far as possible at first hand, as you have done with painting and the drama which, apart from general office work, are the only big things you have dealt with thus far. For myself, I started in life with a very strong general feeling of devotion to humanity, and that helped me through and gave colour and interest to everything. You may get at the same sort of result, perhaps a better one, in other ways, building up from the particular instead of working down to it, if you will open yourself out. For I don't for a moment believe that real human sympathy, where it is called for, or a large and liberal interest in human affairs is in any degree lacking in you, only these things, like everything else that is good in us need exercise and nourishment. . . . When Ensor leaves you will have to take on the labour subjects, and it will take some hard work to prepare yourself. You must try and do some reading, and if you could get to know at first hand the way the poor live and the ways in which the very poor suffer it would no doubt help you very greatly. . . . You ought to get to know some of the labour men (R. C. would help you there) when next there is a trade dispute on, and for the literature of the subject I should think you might take Mr and Mrs Webb's history of Trade Unions and a book on the co-operative movement.

When Scott wrote this letter he expected his son to succeed him in the editorship of the paper. Unhappily his promising career was cut short. He died in 1908 of tuberculosis. He went to live at the Ancoats Settlement and to work in the Ancoats slums, and he was believed to have caught the disease in the house of a woman dying of it.

Scott's youngest son, E. T. Scott, who succeeded him as editor in 1929, was an economist both by nature and training. He began his career on the staff of the *Economist* under the sympathetic guidance of his father's friend, Mr F. W. Hirst. He first made his mark in the *Manchester Guardian* by a series of articles on the railway strike in 1919, which recalled

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the part Montague had played in the strike of 1893. But as the world's troubles became more and more complicated, E. T. Scott turned his mind to these questions, leaving labour problems to the capable and sympathetic hands of Mr A. P. Wadsworth, well known for his important book on the Cotton Industry.<sup>1</sup> Scott, who had discussed the problems of the new Labour Party with Mr Arthur Henderson during the war, welcomed the co-operation of its leading thinkers, and Mr Tawney, Mr Cole, Mr C. M. Lloyd, and Mr Laski contributed regularly or frequently to his columns. Thus the paper has never lost the character it assumed in the eighties. At the time of Scott's jubilee, Branting's Socialist paper, the *Stockholm Social Democrat*, observed that it was not often that Socialists found themselves praising a *bourgeois* paper, but that Scott and the *Manchester Guardian* had earned this distinction.

Not less important was the part played by the *Manchester Guardian* in the third great controversy of those years. The South African War of 1899-1902 divided Liberals almost as sharply as Home Rule and the new Labour questions. The right wing followed Grey and Haldane; the left wing Morley, Harcourt, Bryce, Robert Reid, and Lloyd George. Asquith leaned to the right from the beginning, but being essentially a man of peace he was a moderating influence in the first stages. Campbell-Bannerman having just been elected leader of the party in the House of Commons in succession to Harcourt, was also a moderating influence in the first stages, though like Spencer and Ripon he leaned as clearly to the left as Asquith to the right. As the controversy grew sharper these two men diverged, and when Campbell-Bannerman made his famous attack on 'methods of barbarism', in June 1901, the party almost split in two, Asquith, Grey, Haldane, and Fowler joining to form the Liberal League, a body small in numbers, but strong in wealth and influence. Behind the Liberal League was Rosebery, who, though much more critical of Milner and Chamberlain than his lieutenants, was regarded as the future leader of an

<sup>1</sup> *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire. 1600-1780*, by A. P. Wadsworth and Julia De L. Mann.

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Imperialist Liberal party. The tension was acute, for when Campbell-Bannerman attacked farm burning, Haldane and Grey went so far on the other side as to support the proclamations that outlawed the Boer Generals in the field.

Scott wrote a letter to Hobhouse in June 1901, when the strife in the party was at its bitterest.

I saw C. B. yesterday and found him in the highest spirits. He evidently feels that Asquith's speech has released him from certain obligations which had become onerous and that he is now free to take his own line. I don't know how far this latest row, the grounds for which are rather absurdly inadequate and largely based on pure misunderstanding, is likely to mark a permanent dividing of the ways. Nor need we, I think, greatly concern ourselves on the subject. But I detest personal quarrels and I would do nothing whatever to make it more difficult than it need be for any of these men to take the right course. Grey, I fancy, is hopeless by conviction; Asquith, I should say, not at all so but much corrupted by his surroundings—a great Parliamentary force, possible yet to be utilized. Rosebery, oddly enough, is I believe in considerable disfavour with the Roseberyites. He, as you know, was in favour of the Rugby policy but has been too weak to enforce it, and Milner's presence in England is an immense difficulty for us. Haldane works him for all he is worth with his little following, and there is no doubt he greatly stiffens Imperialist feeling on both sides of the House.

The suspicion that Rosebery and the Roseberyites were not in complete agreement on the war was confirmed by Rosebery's famous speech at Chesterfield in December 1901, for though the speech pleased some of the Imperialists by its abandonment of Home Rule, it condemned Milner's demand for unconditional surrender. 'I believe,' Rosebery said, 'in the stern, efficient, vigorous prosecution of the war to its natural end, but I believe that its natural end is a regular peace and a regular settlement—not unconditional surrender or interminable hunting down of an enemy proclaimed outlaws and rebels.' Thus on what was now the main

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issue between Campbell-Bannerman on one side, and Grey and Haldane on the other, Rosebery agreed with Campbell-Bannerman. The speech was followed by a meeting between Rosebery and Campbell-Bannerman about which all kinds of legends grew up. Hobhouse sent Scott an account of the meeting:

*January 5, 1902*

In case I don't come back to-morrow, I write to say that I had a very long talk with C. B. and Sinclair—over three hours. He is entirely with us as to tactics. Sinclair is especially delighted with Montague's leader of Friday. C. B. is most emphatic as to the character of his conversation with R. He threshed the whole thing out. He did not go on his knees to him or 'offer him the Lord Chancellorship' but asked him fairly whether he meant to co-operate or not. Flatly, R. did not. Ireland alone was enough to block the way. R. is not a Home Ruler—says Home Rule was perhaps possible, if better managed, in 1886 but not now. It is utterly opposed to the ideas of Englishmen, and they will never consent to it. Might perhaps consent to provincial councils or separate committees at Westminster, but nothing more. He confessed that differences on the war were not sufficient to bar co-operation. He admits much general agreement, and only objects to 'methods of barbarism' as having done harm abroad.

Bryce wrote to Scott about the same time:

*January 1, 1902*

Many thanks for your interesting letter. It is to be feared that R. will not rejoin the party. But if that is so, it seems to me that the party should understand 'tis his own doing, and that we have not repudiated him; and I should think we ought to put the best construction we can on his speech until he repudiates that construction, which one hopes he may not do.

I trust it is not true that the bulk of the Liberal party in the country is disposed to throw over Home Rule. Men say so. But it would be in the last degree ignominious—and a blunder too, in view of the future.

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No man could take Scott's course in the Boer War without receiving a good deal of unpleasant attention, and his house and the office of the paper were at times under the special protection of the police. The cartoon exhibiting him taking a bribe from Kruger reflected a hostility too crude to disturb a man of his temper, but a neighbour who was justly esteemed in Manchester for his public energy and his large ideas wrote that though it was most painful to him, he felt obliged to break off friendly relations with Scott and the *Manchester Guardian*. 'It appears to me to be an obvious duty, as the course which you took respecting Mr. Gladstone's proposals for Home Rule, and still more the course which you have taken respecting the controversy about education, and most of all the course which you have taken about the Transvaal War, force me to believe that either political life has partly deprived you of reason or that you have preferred the supposed advantage of a political party to the good of the country.'

It is pleasant to know that the writer of this letter lived to have his name inscribed, a quarter of a century later, on the list of donors of the Epstein bust.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of the *Manchester Guardian* in this struggle,<sup>1</sup> for it formed and led a party stronger in the country than in the Press. The Unionist Press in London presented an unbroken die-hard front, since the *Spectator*, which sometimes took a different course from the regular party organs, was on this occasion in complete agreement with them. Thus, though there were distinguished Unionist journalists like Frederick Greenwood and Arthur Elliot who were on the side of the minority, no Unionist paper gave any countenance or hospitality to their views. The Liberal Press, much weaker at the best, was divided. In the first few weeks of the war the *Daily Chronicle* changed sides, and Massingham resigned the editorship, taking with him Harold Spender and Vaughan

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, writing to Scott at the time of his jubilee (May 1921) said, 'Never shall I forget how you, almost alone in the British Press, stood up for Right and Honour during the South African War, when so many, from whom better things had been hoped, failed us.'

## LIFE OF C. P. SCOTT

Nash.<sup>1</sup> For the first two years of the war the *Daily News* was edited by E. T. Cook, the ablest of Milner's partisans. In 1901 it was sold to a group of anti-war Liberals, and it became a powerful force on that side, first in the hands of R. C. Lehmann, then in those of Mr A. G. Gardiner, who was to steer its course for twenty years with distinguished success. In the *Westminster Gazette*, Mr J. A. Spender, aided by Charles Geake and F. C. Gould, kept up an acute and damaging criticism of the Government's policy, while seeking to conciliate as far as possible the views of the different sections of Liberals. The *Morning Leader* and the *Star* were definitely Campbell-Bannermann papers, and they had on their staff as writers the present Lord Chief Justice, Mr H. N. Brailsford, Mr Bertram Christian, and Mr Ernest Parke. But the *Morning Leader*, though so strongly equipped, was a new venture without the influence of the great London dailies. In the weekly Press a group of young Liberals into whose hands the *Speaker* had lately passed, including Hilaire Belloc, F. W. Hirst, G. K. Chesterton, John Simon, Philip Carr, F. Y. Eccles, and the present writer, gave what help vigour without experience could give to the cause of the minority and its intrepid leader.

The Liberal divisions were reflected in the Press in the provinces as well as in London. The Liberals who followed Campbell-Bannermann, whether inside or outside London, looked to the *Manchester Guardian* as their prophet. Scott, busy in the House of Commons, did not write himself. The conduct of the campaign in the leading columns was in the hands of two men who formed a remarkable combination. Montague, a writer with incomparable skill in the use of irony, satire, and eloquent indignation, looked on the journalist as a Paladin, as a man who owed to his craft the very best that he could give. This was just the kind of struggle to draw out all his power. To the end of his life he was prouder of being Scott's right-hand man in a battle for justice

<sup>1</sup> The *Manchester Guardian* benefited, for Massingham served on its London staff and Spender on its Manchester staff for some months, and Vaughan Nash went to India to study the famine as its special correspondent.

## THE TURN TO THE LEFT

than of being C. E. Montague, prouder of the articles that he wrote on the Boer War which appeared without a signature, than of *Rough Justice* which carried his name all over the world. Hobhouse, who lacked Montague's special gifts as an artist, was unrivalled when the hour demanded close and exact argument, for his mind moved swiftly and surely over the widest and most complicated field of facts, and nothing ever escaped him. Mr J. A. Hobson has well said of him that the distinctive feature of his character was 'the union of a powerful intellect with a profoundly emotional nature'. This combination enabled him, a born debater, to bring to bear on the argument that he conducted night after night, the most deadly of weapons, passion that can keep its head. Morley wrote of his articles at this time: 'I cannot sufficiently admire the acuteness, industry, grasp, and power with which Hobhouse has carried on this fight.'

When the Liberal League was formed Campbell-Bannerman was fighting an uphill battle with the Rosebery influence, which was drawing into its orbit all the wealth and prestige of the Liberal party. He emerged leader of a party pledged to self-government in South Africa, refusing to abandon Home Rule, looking in its domestic policy to the left rather than to the right. In this struggle the *Manchester Guardian* had been the chief force on his side, and the courage and power with which it had pressed advice, of which we may say, as Demosthenes said of the advice that he gave to the Athenians, that it was bad advice for a paper to give but good advice for a nation to follow, had gained for it a place as a leading Liberal paper among the newspapers of the world.



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## CHAPTER VII

### THE CRISIS OF 1905

It was fortunate for Scott that Taylor was in full sympathy with the change that had come over the political complexion of the *Manchester Guardian*. On the questions that came near to breaking up the Liberal Party—Home Rule and the South African War—they took the same view. They had their differences, but the questions on which they differed never became in their lifetime great dividing issues.

Scott had two enthusiasms to which Taylor was either cold or hostile, Proportional Representation and Women's Suffrage. On March 7, 1884, Taylor wrote: 'Do not you ride that Proportional Representation principle too far. You know I have not much affection for the principle.' On Women's Suffrage his earlier correspondence was rather uncertain and confused, and Scott was allowed to put arguments on behalf of the principle. Afterwards Taylor hardened. He put his foot down in a letter on April 29, 1892. 'Your article yesterday on the Female Suffrage Bill was adroitly done, and your display of the cloven foot most discreetly managed; still it was quite visible. I must ask you not to advocate this measure whilst I live. The restriction cannot last very long.'

Taylor, on the other hand, developed in later life an enthusiasm for drastic temperance legislation that Scott could not share. In January 1892 he complained that Scott was weak on this question and too ready to back up 'milk and water temperance folks'. In 1895, when the policy Taylor preferred had been taken up by the Government, he continually found fault with the leaders in the *Manchester Guardian* as lukewarm and ineffective. He took, himself, a view of the popularity of Local Veto which shows that his own enthusiasm had carried him further from the hard facts than Scott had been carried by his enthusiasm on the subject of Proportional Representation, for he thought Local Veto so popular that

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the Conservative Opposition would not dare to defeat the Government on it. This original view he put before Rosebery when dining with him in June 1895, just nine days before Rosebery's Government fell. Rosebery, with his high sense of what was due to a guest, evidently went as far as a man of the world could go in humouring so agreeable a fancy. Taylor wrote to Scott:

June 13, 1895

DEAR CHARLES,

I dined at 10 Downing Street last evening and met several M.P.s whom I know, including Roby and Hopwood. Lord Rosebery was very kind and I was placed on his right hand. He talked to me a good deal during dinner, but chiefly on general subjects. I said to him that my nephew was standing for Thornbury and I was hoping there would be time for him to make himself known. He replied 'I do not see why not,' and he then added 'unless an accident occurs which I do not anticipate, for I consider the administrative work of the Government (it is not my doing) has been so well done that unexpected events are less probable.' We agreed that the Tories were greatly at a loss to know what cry to take up, and I ventured to say I thought they would take good care not to defeat the Government on local option, for to identify themselves clearly before the country with the liquor interests would be too dangerous. He did not entirely agree with that opinion . . .

On the larger questions of policy, Taylor welcomed the new importance that the *Guardian* had acquired by the lead it had given to Liberalism in the country. From time to time he wrote to Scott in terms of great enthusiasm.

On December 30, 1886, he wrote:

DEAR CHARLES,

I find you are off to St Andrews to-morrow for a well deserved holiday. Before you go, and before the Old Year has quite passed away I desired to write you a few lines to give you a sincere acknowledgment of all the arduous, brave, and noble work you have done—especially through this year—in connection with the *Manchester Guardian*. I shall not attempt to

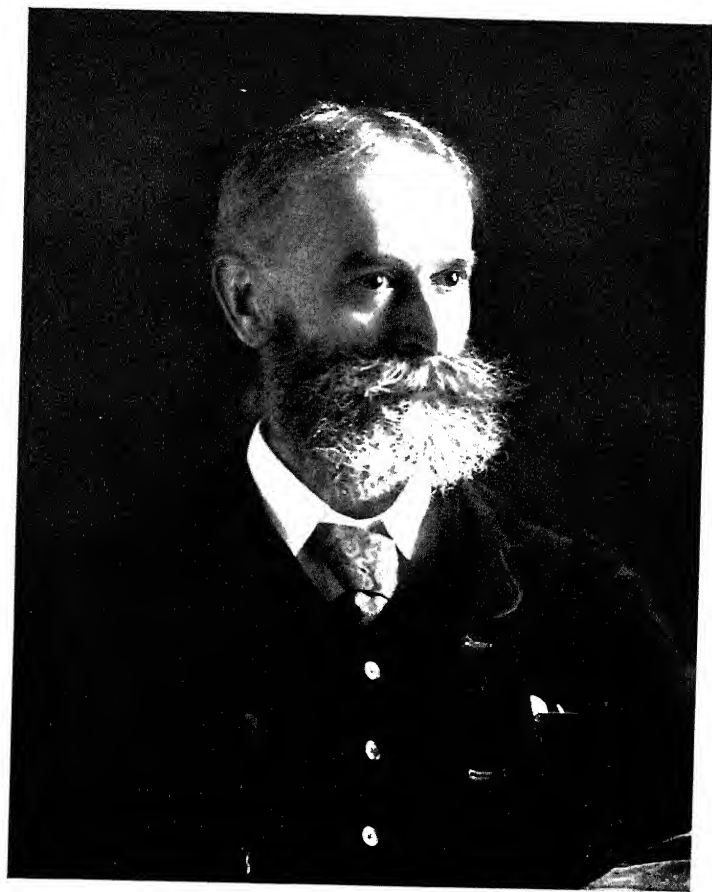
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express at length the admiration I feel for all you have done for the paper, or my sense of the proud position you have placed me in as its Proprietor. You have raised the paper to a position it never won before, and put its praise in the mouth of all True Liberals. I am constantly told the *Guardian* is the one only journal throughout England which has been equal to the occasion, and I hear it spoken of always in terms of the highest respect. I cannot listen to such praise unmoved and I do not think I ought to allow my feelings to remain unuttered.

This was one of many letters written in this spirit. In 1896 Taylor met Gladstone at dinner at the Armitsteads, and received from Gladstone a compliment on a leading article in the paper which gave him great delight. Taylor had the satisfaction of sending Montague, the writer of the article, a message from Gladstone himself.

Unfortunately, before Taylor's death in October 1905, the close relations that had so long existed between the two men were undermined. Towards the end of his life Taylor became a prey to those anxieties about finance that are not uncommon in old age, and the difficulties of the *Manchester Guardian*, due in part to its attitude to the Boer War and in part to the rise of the new journalism, caused him increasing concern. Scott was giving less personal attention to the paper at this time than at any other time of his life, and he seemed to Taylor to be neglecting it. During the last four years of Taylor's life the two men drifted away from each other and the old confidence was destroyed.

Two things had happened to take Scott away from the paper. In 1895 he entered the House of Commons. He had already contested three elections with Taylor's goodwill, all in North-East Manchester, where he stood at the General Elections of 1886 and 1892 and the by-election in 1891. On one occasion the majority against him fell to 110. In 1894 he withdrew from North-East Manchester because the I.L.P. decided to run a candidate, and he was anxious not to embitter his relations with the new Labour Party. For this he was publicly thanked by Dr Pankhurst, who called his decision 'a signal act of magnanimity'. In 1895 he was elected for the Leigh



C. P. Scott, M.P., 1899

*Elliott & Fry*



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Division of Lancashire, and he kept his seat at the Khaki Election of 1900, though he stood as an uncompromising opponent of the Boer War. His majority was 667 in 1895, and 120 in 1900. Taylor did not object at the time to his entering the House of Commons, though he much regretted that he was not to sit for a Manchester constituency.

Scott did not make a great mark in the House of Commons. He was not a good speaker, except on ceremonial occasions when the quality that matters most is good taste. His speech when receiving the Freedom of the City of Manchester in 1930 was perfect of its kind, but as a debater he was unready. In writing he always found at once just the word he wanted: in speaking he lost his way looking for it. It was as if he could not think comfortably without a pen in his hand. But without gaining any special distinction, he gained universal respect for his courage and sincerity, qualities that were very evident in his passionate criticism of the Government's policy in the Soudan and South Africa. In the party conflicts over the rival claims of Rosebery and Harcourt he was a strong supporter of Harcourt. His personal relations with Rosebery were very slight, for the first time that he saw him after 1895, when he refused an honour, was in 1916, when he called on him to discuss the Lloyd George plan for a National Government. But he had a correspondence with Rosebery in 1896 that raises questions which are still interesting to-day.

Political democracy is an expensive institution, for the cost of bribing a small number of voters in a limited number of constituencies, which made elections a heavy charge in old days, was smaller than the cost of keeping up great organizations and fighting every constituency in the country. The problem becomes more acute as a society is less satisfied to leave Parliament to the class that can afford to pay such expenses out of its own pocket. In the days before the Reform Bill the close boroughs could be used for bringing poor men into Parliament, and Burke, Romilly, Brougham, and Mac-kintosh, among others, owed their start in life to patronage in this form. In the spirited letter he wrote to the Duke of Norfolk, when the Duke gave Thetford to a rich rival, Greevey

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argued that the great Whig patricians had commonly recognized an obligation to use this patronage for public rather than private ends.<sup>1</sup> In modern times two methods have been invented for meeting this burden, neither of them satisfactory. One is the method adopted by the older parties. By this method a secret subscription to a party fund is treated as a public service, and rich men who make large subscriptions are rewarded when public honours are bestowed. The other is the method adopted by the Labour party. By this method the Trade Union funds are made available for the party expenses, and the Trade Unions receive in return a large voice in the control of candidates and policy. The method adopted by the Liberal and Conservative parties came under fierce criticism before the war, when Mr Belloc used his remarkable powers of invective and satire to prove that it was a source of corruption in public life. Some demanded the abolition of the whole system; others the abolition of secrecy. After the war complaints grew louder, for the Coalition Government that held office between 1916 and 1922 had been more lavish with honours than any other. The growing excitement over the question led to an inquiry by a Royal Commission in 1922, and as a result of its recommendations a Political Honours Scrutiny Committee was set up, whose duty it is to see that honours are not given to unsuitable persons. Thus subscriptions to party funds are recognized as public services, though these subscriptions are still secret, but the personal character of the subscriber is considered, and a cynical Whip, if such a person is to be found in such an office, is less tempted to say if a dusty cheque is offered to him, '*Non olet unde sit*'.

In the nineties the knowledge of these arrangements was still confined to intimate circles, and the Prime Minister of the day was not in the secret. Soon after Rosebery became Prime Minister he made four Peers, and a rumour was started that he had made them on these grounds. The *Manchester Guardian* referred to this rumour, and Rosebery spoke on the subject at Huddersfield. In this speech he explained that as he had just started a campaign against the House of Lords he would have preferred to make no Peers, but that Gladstone told him

<sup>1</sup> *Creevey's Life and Times*, edited by John Gore, p. 112.

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that he had promised two peerages, and that he looked to Rosebery to redeem his promise. Rosebery had decided that if he made any Peers he would give peerages to the Governor of the Cape, who was a Unionist, and to his own Minister of Agriculture. Consequently four Peers were made. After setting out these facts Rosebery went on to say: 'As regards receiving one farthing of corrupt consideration for these peerages, I declare on my honour as a gentleman that it is a scandalous lie. . . . I was a little led into this vein of thought by our excellent friend, the *Manchester Guardian*, which alluded to the subject in an article yesterday. It said "if there had been these scandalous transactions, it was a matter for the Whips." There are no scandalous transactions, and it was not a matter for the Whips because—and this is a view which makes it stronger and simpler—I did not have a single word on the subject from any Whip. I had no communication with Mr Ellis or any other Whip about it. My only communication was with Mr Gladstone.'

Scott wrote to Rosebery to express his regret for the passage in the *Guardian*:

March 30, 1896

DEAR LORD ROSEBERY,

May I just say how much I regret the passage in Friday's leader in the *Guardian* to which you referred in your short speech on Saturday. It ought of course to have been struck out. But the leader was extremely late and the revision unfortunately imperfect.

Personally I have never attached the slightest credit to the particular rumours referred to, which I regarded as an invention of the enemy, and I am the more annoyed that we should have appeared to give any sort of credence to them.

Please don't think of acknowledging this note, which I am afraid I am writing selfishly for the relief of my feelings.

*Confidential*

38 BERKELEY SQUARE, W.

March 31, 1896

MY DEAR MR SCOTT,

The allusion in the *Guardian* requires no explanation. I rejoiced in it, for it gave me the opportunity that I had long



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desired of pulverising this particular lie, to which Mr Chamberlain, as a Secretary of State, had given circulation. It is amusing to see how the squirters of this filth are now declaring that they never said or intended or thought anything of the sort.

John Bright was never afraid of using the word Lie: we must not be too squeamish. The allusion in the *Manchester Guardian* was quite natural, and did good.

But I wanted to see you at Huddersfield, and was extremely sorry not to have a chat. I wanted to tell you how greatly struck I was with a leaderette in, I think, Friday's *Guardian* on the danger to the British Empire from a combination of other Powers, if we ceased to be a Free Trade nation. It is, I think, a strikingly original idea, and is a subject for much meditation. It might at any rate be usefully developed and expanded.

Schwann, one of your M.P.s, rather surprised me at Woodhouse's dinner by the line he took on this subject. I am not sure that he approved Chamberlain's proposal himself, but he seemed to say that it would find a very general acceptance. But we were talking across the table in great din, and I may have misunderstood him.

Yours sincerely,  
ROSEBERY

Rosebery acted on the suggestion made in his letter when he spoke at the centenary of the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester.

'A scattered Empire, like ours, founded on commerce and cemented by commerce, an Empire also well-defended so as not to invite aggression, can and will make for nothing but peace. But an Empire spread all over the world, with a uniform barrier of a Customs union, presented everywhere in the face of every traveller, would be, I will not say an Empire of War, but a perpetual menace, a perpetual incentive and invitation to war.'

Scott always held that his ten years in the House of Commons were of great benefit to him as a journalist and this is

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doubtless true. But they kept him in London when Taylor would have liked him to be in Manchester. Scott himself had the fullest confidence in his chief lieutenants, Montague and Hobhouse between 1895 and 1902, and Montague and Sidebotham between 1902 and 1905. Mr Attenborough was then at the beginning of his long and distinguished career as the head of the sub-editors' room. But it is not surprising that Taylor thought that Scott's unrivalled experience and judgment were needed on the spot at a time when the paper was in rough water.

Scott's absence in London would have mattered less if it had not happened that Mrs Scott became seriously ill at this time. She had worked hard for the paper while her health was good, and Scott, remembering all this, and being a devoted husband, gave himself up to nursing her and taking her abroad. He realized, but rather too late, that he could not combine attendance in Parliament, the care of his wife, and his duties to his paper, and he arranged to retire from the House of Commons at the next election. It would have been better if he had retired as soon as Mrs Scott's illness began to need his constant care. As it was, during Taylor's last months of life, Scott was largely distracted from the paper by anxiety about his wife, anxiety which often took him out of England, and by his duties in Parliament. Taylor, who had formerly been supremely happy about his editor, feeling that the fortunes of the paper were secure in Scott's hands, grew steadily more uneasy, and with the loss of confidence his friendship for Scott cooled. Scott was conscious of a change of sentiment when last he visited him, but his optimistic temperament blinded him to its full significance. This he only learned after Taylor's death.

When the first partnership was formed between Scott and Taylor, the shares in the paper were divided as follows:

J. E. TAYLOR, seven-tenths of profits;  
PETER ALLEN, Manager, two-tenths of profits;  
C. P. SCOTT, Editor, one-tenth of profits and salary  
£400 a year.

This continued until Allen's death, when the partnership was renewed on the basis of :

## C. P. SCOTT

J. E. TAYLOR, 73.25 per cent ;

C. P. SCOTT, 26.75 per cent and no salary.

From 1870 to 1898 the profits varied between £12,000 and £24,000 per annum. After that the profits fell away rapidly. This may have been partly due to the unpopularity incurred during the Boer War, but was attributable primarily to the rise of the halfpenny Press, which entailed increased expenditure, and to the business depression which diminished revenue. Under the terms of the partnership the entire copyright and assets reverted on the death of the senior partner to his estate.

Mr Taylor died in October 1905. His will, dated June 29 of 1904, gave C. P. Scott the first option of purchase of the business of the *Manchester Guardian* for £10,000 (this did not include the building), but did not make it obligatory on the executors to sell. At first Scott did not realize the difficulties of the position, and assumed that he could exercise the option given him. He was not alone in this view ; as he wrote a few weeks afterwards to Hobhouse, even Mr Taylor's solicitor read it as giving him the option of purchase at an extremely low figure. Further examination of the will and consultation with counsel revealed the fact that the discretionary powers given to the trustees rendered the option worthless. Scott put the position as follows to Sir Robert Reid, when he wrote to ask him for advice :

My cousin and partner, Mr J. E. Taylor, sole proprietor of the *Manchester Guardian*, who for many years had given me to understand that I was to succeed him in the proprietorship of the paper, has left a will of extraordinary vagueness. On the one hand he vests the property in trustees with power either to sell or to administer for a period which might extend to twenty-one years after the death of a man now forty ; on the other he directs that before selling they must offer me the paper at a fixed price (a very low one).

Before the end of October all hopes that the trustees would exercise their power of offering the paper to Scott had gone. The position, as seen from the Scott side, is described in a letter from Montague to Hobhouse, on November 1, 1905.

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Scott and I both feel that we should like you to know, in the strictest confidence, that the future of the *Manchester Guardian* is very gravely threatened. Mr Taylor left an obscure will, the apparent intention of which was that the paper should be offered at an almost nominal price to Scott. But, according to counsel's opinion (Sir R. Reid's among them), there is no obligation on the executors . . . to do this at any particular time, and the executors evidently intend to administer the paper themselves 'in the interests of the estate'. The only apparent chance for the paper is that they should be induced to sell Scott the paper at a fancy price, and it is very doubtful whether they will agree to this. . . . I fear the chance is not great. . . . I am afraid, altogether, that the chances are that Scott's whole connection with the paper will end in January or March, though of course we don't despair yet and we must not breathe a word about the possible calamity to any one outside.

Overtures for the purchase of the paper were made in November, but they were rejected. 'I fear things are closing in here,' wrote Montague on November 14; he described offers of mediation, 'but I am afraid things get worse and that Scott feels this. He is horribly worried these days, too, by some new symptoms of Mrs Scott's, not immediately or necessarily dangerous, but enough to increase his anxiety.' The difficulties of the trustees were described by one of them in a letter in November to Scott's brother. 'I would say, therefore, "Read the will". It was made a little more than a year ago, at a time, therefore, when, as you yourself admit, the relations between your brother and Uncle Edward were not what they had been. Think first of what it might have said, and said quite easy and simply, and compare that with what it does say quite plainly and positively. Ask yourself whether the executors are not bound to do the best for the interests of those whose trustees they are. Read the codicil and you will find that some of the *cestuique trustent* are minors under an extremely strict and tightly drawn trust, and consider whether that does not increase the moral obligation of the executors; and if, after doing all this, you

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still think that "abstract justice" is the only thing the executors have to take into consideration, I shall be more than surprised. Above all please believe that the executors are all of them fully alive to the tragedy of your brother's position.'

At this time Mrs Scott grew very much worse and on the evening of November 27th she died. The outlook was unhappily at its darkest. 'I feel,' Mrs Scott had written to her sister-in-law on October 31, 'that we ought to begin to face our altered future. I don't think either Charles or I could bear to stay on here, for any time, after the matter were decided against us. Charles will have no position on the paper after the New Year. . . .'

Montague, writing to Hobhouse on December 4, described Scott's bearing in this calamity. 'I think you fully understood Scott more quickly than I did. Even after knowing him for fifteen years and being his son-in-law for seven, I have felt all this week as if I had never known—much as I thought of him before—one-half of what there is to love and respect in him. You can't conceive how absolutely simple and controlled and unself-pitying he has been.'

So hopeless did Montague feel the position to be that he applied on December 10 for the post of dramatic critic on the *Tribune*. On December 13 a meeting took place between Scott and the Trustees. He explained why he had been obliged to reject their proposal that he should edit the paper, under their control, but working under conditions that he regarded as intolerable, and put forward his own proposals. These he described in a letter to Hobhouse the next day (December 14): 'I have offered instead (i) to purchase the copyright at an arbitrated price plus 20 per cent to make the trustees absolutely safe; (ii) to carry on for a year experimentally under the trustees in my present position and with my present powers, substituting only their authority for Mr Taylor's.'

On December 15 news came that the trustees had definitely decided to decline Scott's offer of carrying on for an experimental year. What else the trustees had decided was not known. Montague described the position in a letter to Hobhouse of December 15.

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I am most truly sorry to have shilly shalled to the very end, at the *Tribune's* expense. I felt, and gathered that Scott felt, that all was over except the last formalities of resistance, when suddenly, after I last wrote to you, there came word that the executors had abandoned all the plans under discussion for working the paper in conjunction with Scott. Scott reads this as foreshadowing an offer to sell. . . .

In any case the abandonment of the joint working plan will, I think, make Scott feel free to accept a recommendation which Sir R. Reid is offering him to his old constituency at Dumfries. I am delighted at this chance of Scott's going on in Parliament (in case things go wrong, anyhow) and have walked miles with him in 'The Firs' garden urging acceptance. With other political work assured to him if the paper goes wrong I feel as if we could all pull through our other little difficulties easily enough.

The end of what he calls 'a very pretty dead-lock' is described by Scott in a letter to Hobhouse on December 18.

I . . . pressed my proposal for purchase, offering to give arbitrators' price for copyright plus 20 per cent and to accept almost any arbitration they liked. To-day they write agreeing to negotiate on the basis of a sale and asking me to carry on on existing basis for three months from January 1 while terms are being arranged. I shan't be difficult and I don't think they would like to be exacting, so it looks like a win! Still, one mustn't shout till one is out of the wood, and I have been too often disappointed not to remain in some degree distrustful.

Montague described to Hobhouse on December 20 how Scott 'unexpectedly got a letter from the executors to say that they had abandoned their plan of running the paper and were willing to consider the question of purchase.' He ends his letter 'Heaven make Smith Chief Librarian of the B.M.'<sup>1</sup>

Scott had now to pay the full market price for the copyright, and the building and business and other assets. This sum was

<sup>1</sup> Cecil Smith (now Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith) one of the trustees, was Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum, and was known to be in favour of letting Scott buy the paper.

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put at £242,000, of which £100,000 was charged for the building. Scott's personal fortune was only £48,000, and the profits of the business had declined during the last few years. The profits had been £6,720 in 1903; £4,312 in 1904; and £1,200 in 1905.

As a business venture, therefore, the prospects were not alluring, but Scott never hesitated for a moment, and his relatives rallied to his assistance. A limited company was formed, Scott's £48,000 forming the ordinary capital, on which sum, to the day of his death, he never drew any interest. The other capital was in the form of four per cent preference shares. His cousin and old friend, Mrs Taylor, took up £20,000, his sister Sarah £20,000, and his sisters Isabella and Catherine £5,000 each. His four children, being of age, were able to release a settlement and take up £17,000. A mortgage of £80,000 was raised on the building. Sundry small loans and liquid assets in the business left a final overdraft at the bank of about £20,000. After 1910 the paper regained its prosperity. In that year the bank overdraft was paid off, and in 1919 the mortgage.

The negotiations lasted a very long time and it was not until the summer of 1907 that they were completed. Scott's difficulties and danger had not, of course, been generally known, but he had confided them to a few of his friends. Morley, who was one of them, wrote to him when at last he was out of the wood.

MY DEAR SCOTT,

August 14, 1907

Your letter gives me the liveliest pleasure and satisfaction. I congratulate you personally, and I congratulate our party. Never was a time when that party stood in more need of wise and militant counsel.

With most cordial good wishes,

Ever yours very sincerely,

JOHN MORLEY

Scott had now invested his whole fortune and that of his family in the *Manchester Guardian*. The revenues of the paper had been steadily declining. But if he had wanted

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to be a rich man he could easily have used the paper for that purpose by the simple device of changing its character. 'We had no such thing as printed newspapers in those days,' said Defoe in his *Journal of the Plague* 'to spread rumours and reports of things, and to improve upon them by the invention of men, as I have lived to see practised since'. Scott lived to see such improvement one of the most profitable of the arts of the journalist. A new Press had sprung up, described by Lord Salisbury in a mordant epigram when he said that Mr Harmsworth had invented a paper for those who could read but could not think, and another for those who could see but could not read. This was a summary description of the kind of newspaper that was creating a new kind of rich man. If Scott's ambitions had taken this form he could easily have become a paper lord, either by conducting his paper with an eye to profit, or by accepting one of the many offers he received from persons who were prepared to conduct it in that spirit. If this had been Scott's desire, if he had found some grand mansion for himself in the country where he might live with a peerage to remind him of the good life's work he had done in building up a newspaper, English history would have been different. But he despised the type of mind that prizes wealth and ostentation. When the *Manchester Guardian* came at last into his hands he decided to use his opportunities as proprietor to carry further the principles on which he had acted in editing the paper. He made it a rule from the first to draw a fixed salary<sup>1</sup> and never to take any profits from the paper, thus he built up a reserve fund and used the opportunity he had of making a fortune to buy his independence. A letter that he wrote in 1926 to a young Oxford don who was thinking of joining the paper put his view quite clearly.

June 21, 1926

DEAR MR HARROD,

. . . Baldwin quoted the other day<sup>2</sup> something which I had

<sup>1</sup> He never allowed himself a larger salary than £2000 as editor and £500 as Governing Director.

<sup>2</sup> ' . . . while it would be an impertinence for me in my ignorance to venture to tell you how you should conduct your business I yet feel that I



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written on the whole duty of the journalist, and I will enclose it if I can lay my hands on it. As a matter of fact the paper is carried on as a public service and not for profit. As I think I mentioned to you, since I have had the paper—i.e. for nearly twenty years—we have not taken a penny in dividends and, though at the present time it makes large profits, the whole of these are applied to strengthening and improving the paper or to a reserve fund to secure its independence. I don't claim any particular credit for this, but if you are to consider giving up what, I am sure, will be a brilliant academic career, for one of quite another sort, it is right that you should know the sort of objects you would be promoting.

Yours very sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

If Scott did not care for a newspaper as a means of profit, neither did he care for it as an advertisement of power. He had no desire to be known to the public as a man whose nod could make politicians tremble. A letter that he wrote to Mr Nevinson,<sup>1</sup> one of the most highly valued of his contributors, illustrates his indifference to power for its own sake.

cannot do wrong before I sit down to read to you the words of one of the greatest of living journalists on the ideals of your profession. Speaking on journalism and the conduct of a newspaper, he said: "Fundamentally it implies honesty, cleanness, courage, fairness, a sense of duty to the reader and the community. The newspaper is of necessity something of a monopoly, and its first duty is to shun the temptations of monopoly. Its primary office is the gathering of News. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation, must the unclouded face of Truth suffer wrong. Comment is free, but facts are sacred. Propaganda, so called, by this means is hateful. The voice of opponents, no less than that of friends, has a right to be heard. Comment is also justly subject to a self-imposed restraint. It is well to be frank: it is even better to be fair." Those are noble words, and it is a counsel possibly of perfection, but in them is the ideal of the higher type of English journalism, which is the highest type in the world. They are the words of Scott, of the *Manchester Guardian*.' *Manchester Guardian*, May 6, 1926.

<sup>1</sup> Mr Nevinson acted as special correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* on several occasions, serving in that character in Ireland, India, America, and on the Continent of Europe. Scott also entrusted him with the task of examining and describing the ill-treatment of Miss Douglas-Pennant, a subject on which Scott's sympathies were warmly engaged.

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September 7, 1927

DEAR NEVINSON,

Will you kindly write us a signed review of this book about Northcliffe. He would be important if only because his rise is the rise of the vast popular Press. The tragedy of his life seems to me to lie in the fact that though he knew how to create the instruments not only of profit but of power he had not the least idea what to do with his power when he got it. Only in Ireland does he seem ever to have counted for anything that was not commonplace and flashy.

But what a picturesque career!

Yours ever,  
C. P. SCOTT

Scott took measures also to prevent the paper from falling into the hands of persons who might use it as a property rather than a trust. He made it a rule that the ordinary shares of the paper should always be held by members of his family who were working on the staff. By these methods he gave effect to his view that a paper should be regarded as a public organ serving the community as directly as a department of the Civil Service, and under a sense of responsibility equally strong. Of the spirit in which he conducted his paper, and his success in making it a power, one thing more must be said. He made it easier for other newspapers to follow his example. One of the great features of our public life in the nineteenth century was the growth of local newspapers in our big towns which aimed at providing serious discussion of affairs. Such papers were to be found in towns like Leeds, Bradford, Liverpool, and Birmingham. The creation of powerful combinations in the newspaper world threatened all these papers and destroyed some of them. That some still survive is partly due to the example and the success of the *Manchester Guardian*.

Many men when they reach the age of sixty think the time has come for reducing their work. Scott adopted the contrary view. In two respects he was a busier man after 1906 than before. He took a more active part in the work of his paper and he took a more important part in politics.

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It was not until 1898 that Scott started keeping his own leading articles. The records show that most of the time he was in Parliament he never wrote. Between 1906 and the outbreak of the war, he wrote on his special subjects, which were the House of Lords, Women's Suffrage, and Ireland. Early in the war Montague enlisted at the age of forty-seven in the Sportsmen's battalion, and Scott took to writing a great deal. He found that he enjoyed writing more and more, and after the war he continued his new practice. In the year 1919 he wrote one hundred and seventeen long leaders in addition to a number of short articles, and in 1920, one hundred and twenty-three.

This meant that in addition to his work as editor, he wrote the principal leading article about five times every fortnight. On some critical occasions, as at the time of the fall of the first Labour Government, he wrote almost every day for a fortnight. His range of subjects was extended from Women's Suffrage, Ireland, and Proportional Representation, on which he had written before the war, to include all questions of foreign politics. The day to day treatment of these questions demanded the most careful and constant study, and Scott's capacity for hard work was quite unaffected by his years. At the age of eighty, he was able to devote his morning to the study of Blue Books, after a hard night's work, with a clear and vigorous mind, and at all times he discussed public questions in correspondence with his friends. He exchanged hundreds of letters with the men whose opinions carried special weight for him—Bryce, Hobhouse, Dillon, and Loreburn.

All this preparation was needed for the sober argument in which Scott was at his best. He could write the kind of article that makes men feel but he liked better writing the kind of article that makes them think. For the reader he had in his mind's eye was the reader who used his reason and not the reader who lived in his emotions. He developed an easy style which concealed the subtleties of his argument and the mass of knowledge on which he drew.

In politics, too, Scott began now to play a new part. He was no longer in the House of Commons, but he moved in the

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world of high politics as an elder statesman. He was most active in seeing politicians, discussing questions with them and sometimes mediating between them. Scott could stand the strain of this kind of work as few men could. This is how he spent twenty-four hours, at the age of eighty. He did his evening's work at the office, and then took the night train to London. He had breakfast with Mr Lloyd George, spent most of the morning in discussing Balkan questions with M. Vénizélos, lunched with Lord Cecil, returned to Manchester by the afternoon train, and wrote a long leader in the evening.

The men with whom he was most continually in touch were Loreburn, Dillon, Bryce, Morley, Mr Churchill, and Mr Lloyd George; but at different times he saw most of the leading public men of the day. He was often deeper in the secrets of high politics than some Ministers, and he could judge of a particular situation from the different points of view of different Ministers, for Ministers would often consult him about their own plans. Loreburn meditated resignation from time to time, and when a crisis over the navy estimates became acute Mr Lloyd George or some other Minister would seek his advice, knowing that it would be careful, deliberate, and based on a study and grasp of all the facts.<sup>1</sup> Colleagues who worked with him on his paper were struck by his power of writing in a judicial temper even under extreme provocation. This judicial temper made him a valuable counsellor to men who were engaged in public controversy and in the kind of struggle behind the scenes which plays so large a part in public life. As an editor he never let any knowledge he gained in this way find its way into the news, but of course it guided his pen. It

<sup>1</sup> When the House of Commons Committee was about to report on the Marconi affair in the summer of 1913, Mr Lloyd George consulted Scott about the line he should take when the Report was debated in Parliament. Scott was abroad, and he sent the following answer. (This is the only document among his papers bearing on the Marconi scandal.) From Monte Generoso, June 7, 1913. '... About the Marconi business I write with even greater diffidence. There will, I imagine, be two Reports, a majority and a minority Report. Both must, one imagines, wholeheartedly acquit Ministers of all the grosser charges brought against them. But what reservation will the Minority make? A good deal depends on that. My own feeling would be for complete frankness and an unreserved expression of

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is easy, turning from his diaries to his leaders, to see with what skilful and persuasive tact he would enforce the conclusion that he drew from his first-hand knowledge of difficulties that lay below the surface. The next few chapters of this study are occupied with public events and the part Scott took in them, or rather with the three subjects in which he was chiefly interested, Women's Suffrage, Ireland, and Foreign Policy.

regret for whatever you feel you have to regret. That you have regrets I know, because you have told me so, and these I think were not based solely on the fact that trouble had resulted to your colleagues and to the party. If you had thought more about it you wouldn't have done it, though every honest and impartial person would, I believe, acquit you of any sort of improper motive, and those who know you best will also know how little the desire of money-making enters into your composition. There has been an attempt to set up altogether new standards of conduct for Ministers in regard to their private investments, but probably most of us would admit that very speculative investments—that is, investments which are liable to very great and sudden changes of value—are not desirable for them, and the Marconis were of this kind. I believe that a simple and candid statement of this kind would meet with an immediate and cordial response both from the House and from the country. No man ever suffers from taking to himself even a little more blame than he deserves, and I believe that all soreness and all reproach would be swiftly wiped out. Perhaps I ought to apologise for saying all this, but I hope I may claim the privilege of friendship and you will take it for just what it is worth. . . .'

## CHAPTER VIII

### WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

WHEN the Liberal Government took office in January 1906, there were 400 Members of different parties pledged to vote for Women's Suffrage. But this figure gives a misleading impression. 'To tell the truth,' wrote Scott in the *Manchester Guardian* (February 11, 1907) 'the Women's Suffrage movement is only now emerging from the region of the debating society into that of what is called "practical politics", and support of the movement is for the first time ceasing to be a pious opinion, and becoming one on which men know they may be called upon to make sacrifices and to risk a seat in Parliament.'

The difficulties awaiting Women's Suffrage in the region of practical politics were soon apparent. It was a question outside party in the sense that no party except the Labour party, containing about forty members, was agreed about it. But though, owing to this division neither of the older parties could take it up, it was a party question in the sense that both parties believed that their fortunes would be affected by the enfranchisement of women. Radicals believed that a bill enfranchising a small number of women would injure their prospects; Conservatives on the other hand thought that a bill enfranchising a large number of women would injure theirs. Clearly then, it was a very difficult thing to induce the House of Commons to vote in a non-party spirit on this non-party question. Women's Suffrage had thus the worst of both worlds.

There was a further complication. Passions have rarely run so high in politics as they ran in these years. The House of Lords, Ireland, Women's Suffrage, the German rivalry in shipbuilding, the Insurance Bill, the Marconi scandal—these were all issues raising ungovernable elements in the temper of politics: sex hatred, class hatred, race hatred, religious

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hatred, fear of domestic revolution, fear of foreign aggression, a general sense of disturbance and unrest. Two movements, the Ulster movement and the Women's Suffrage movement, were resorting in different degrees to violence. The Opposition had great hopes of overthrowing the Government, and both Government and Opposition regarded its rival as completely unscrupulous in its methods. In such an atmosphere Women's Suffrage was at the mercy of all kinds of cross currents. Many Conservatives who were in favour of Women's Suffrage disliked the prospect of using the hated Parliament Act to pass it into law. The change in the Irish vote, again, reflected the fear that the Government might fall if Women's Suffrage were carried, and Home Rule thus be lost.

Lastly, the introduction of violent methods and the increasing use of this form of pressure by a section of the Suffrage movement drove many politicians into opposition. If the Women's Suffrage vote went steadily down in the House of Commons, this violence was in some cases the excuse, but in others the cause. It is impossible to study Scott's papers without realising that as militant methods became more violent, the temper of the House of Commons hardened against Women's Suffrage.

Scott worked strenuously for conciliation throughout this time of tension. He disapproved strongly of violent methods, especially as they grew more violent, and he wrote of them that they were degrading and hindering the cause. He was often in sharp controversy with the militant leaders, but his good sense and statesmanship protected him from the conclusion to which so many had come, that the use of militant methods was a reason for refusing to remove an injustice. Moreover, he was ready to welcome Women's Suffrage in any form; he fought alike for the Conciliation Bill and for wider measures. Having been warned off the reform by Taylor, during Taylor's lifetime, he was now exceedingly ardent in its support, and he took infinite trouble, continually going to London to interview politicians, or to concert measures with Mr H. N. Brailsford, the Secretary of the Conciliation Committee, or to discuss plans with Sir Edward Grey or Mr

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Lloyd George, or to interview Mr McKenna on behalf of militant prisoners.

In the Parliament of 1906-1909 two private members' bills embodied two different views about the basis of Women's Suffrage. A Suffrage Bill giving the franchise to women 'on the same terms' as to men, after being talked out in 1907, was brought in by Mr Stanger in 1908, and passed its second reading by a majority of 179. Next year, 1909, an Adult Suffrage Bill, giving a vote on a three years residential qualification to men and women alike, received a majority of 26 at its second reading.

In 1908 Campbell-Bannerman, a supporter, was succeeded as Prime Minister by Asquith, an opponent. But Asquith could not disregard the support the House of Commons had given to the principle, and in answer to a deputation on May 20, 1908, which asked, in vain, for facilities for the further progress of Mr Stanger's bill, he stated that the Government intended, before the Parliament ended, to bring in a measure for electoral reform, into which the House of Commons could, if it wished, insert a provision giving votes to women. Such a provision would be treated by the Government as an integral part of the Bill.

But Parliament ended earlier than Asquith had expected, for the Lords threw out Mr Lloyd George's budget, and a General Election was held in January 1910. Just before the election Asquith stated that the Government, if returned, would carry out their plan in the new Parliament.

In the new House of Commons the friends of Women's Suffrage tried a new method. They formed a Committee drawn from all parties, and prepared a Bill, known as the Conciliation Bill, designed to secure the maximum of support in the House of Commons; a Bill, as Scott described it, necessarily modest in order to meet Conservative objections, but so drawn as to meet Liberal and Labour objections by giving no special advantages to property. Mr Brailsford gave to this Committee the invaluable help of the judgment and skill of one of the ablest journalists of the day. He acted as Secretary, and Scott was from first to last in close co-operation with him. The Bill was introduced by Mr



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David Shackleton, a Labour Member, and it passed its second reading on July 12, 1910, by a majority of 110. It was not Radical enough for Mr Lloyd George and Mr Churchill, both of whom voted against it.

The failure of the attempt to reach a settlement of the constitutional question by conference in the autumn of 1910 was followed by the General Election of December. On November 22 Asquith, in the House of Commons, promised that if his Government were still in power in the new Parliament they would find time 'for effectively proceeding' with a Suffrage Bill, provided its title permitted of free amendment, a provision with which the promoters of the Conciliation Bill were ready to comply.

The internal discomforts of the Cabinet are reflected in a conversation Scott had with Haldane on March 16, 1911. Scott was anxious to get him to speak in Manchester on behalf of the Conciliation Bill.

*Private Papers: March 16/1911*

... He replied that we should stand to lose, that the present position of the question to which both sides in the Cabinet had frankly agreed was more favourable than we could well have expected—he referred of course to Asquith's promise of Government time for *all* the stages of the Bill within the lifetime of the present Parliament—that of late the feeling in the Cabinet had become distinctly less favourable and that we should do well to stick to what we had got and not do anything which, though it might not constitute a breach of the terms of the compact, would yet be regarded as an infraction of its spirit. I pointed out that the life of Parliament was precarious and asked how soon we might look for a fulfilment of the pledge. He said that of course it ought not to be long delayed and that they were pressing this point in the Cabinet. He insisted repeatedly that action such as I suggested would do much more harm than good and was to be deprecated in the interest of the suffrage cause.

Scott's closest friend in the Cabinet, Loreburn, was a strong opponent and he blamed Asquith to Scott as having

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conceded too much. Indeed he hinted that he might himself resign if Asquith was ever called upon to redeem his pledge.

Meanwhile all the efforts of the friends of Women's Suffrage were concentrated on the Conciliation Bill. The militants were induced to declare a truce, and on May 5, 1911, the Bill secured a majority of 167 for its second reading. Everything now turned on the meaning the Government meant to give to Asquith's promise of time 'for effectively proceeding'. On May 29 Mr Lloyd George announced that the Government would give a week in the following session. Scott criticized this as 'trifling with a great question', but Asquith and Grey explained that the week would be interpreted 'with reasonable elasticity', and that no obstacle would be opposed to the 'proper' use of the closure.

The Conciliation Bill was thus postponed till the year 1912; but in November 1911, events took a new turn when Asquith made an announcement of policy on Parliamentary Reform. The plan outlined in May 1908, which had lain dormant for three and a half years, was now reproduced and made more definite. The Government intended to carry a Reform Bill through all its stages in 1912; it would be drafted so as to allow of amendments admitting women on any terms that the House of Commons chose to adopt; the Government undertook not to oppose such amendments, and any such amendment, if carried, would be regarded as an integral part of the Bill in all its stages.

Scott took a hopeful view of the new prospect. 'Women have waited long for their enfranchisement,' he wrote, 'it is now at hand.' Lloyd George and Grey were now to conduct a vigorous campaign for suffrage on a broad basis. 'Mr Lloyd George,' he wrote on November 22, 'has hitherto strenuously opposed the Conciliation Bill. He has done so on the ground that a larger measure is needed and could be carried. If it is proved to him that it cannot be carried he will oppose no longer. He is a Suffragist by conviction, and if he cannot get the measure he desires, he is bound to accept the only practicable alternative. But the adhesion

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of Mr Lloyd George, whose opposition has hitherto alone stood in the way of the Conciliation Bill, would at once make its passing—or rather the passing of an amendment to the Reform Bill in similar terms—a certainty.’

But Scott was reckoning without the militants. Whilst the National Union, whatever their private misgivings, decided to use both strings to their bow—that is to support both the Government proposals and the Conciliation Bill—the militants renewed their policy of violence, including the interruption of meetings. At the opening meeting of the new campaign, a meeting organized by the National Liberal Federation at Bath, on November 24, 1911, there was considerable disorder. Scott described Mr Lloyd George’s appeal for a wide franchise for men and women as a ‘portent and a landmark’, but Mr Lloyd George aggravated still further the suspicions of the militants by an unfortunate phrase. He said that the Conciliation Bill had been torpedoed by the Government’s larger proposals for reform.

It is easy enough to understand the bitter suspicions that the militants cherished of the intentions of the Government and of the good faith of individual Ministers. But those suspicions led them into extravagances that, in their turn, gave Liberals good reason for distrusting their motives.

M. Maurois has observed that Ireland dislikes all Englishmen, but dislikes most those who sympathize with her wrongs. A cynic might say that the militants had something of this temper, for they seemed to take a special pleasure in interrupting speakers who were speaking in favour of the suffrage. Speakers who can parry the shafts of opponents find attacks from their own side more disconcerting. It is doubtful whether even Gladstone’s Midlothian campaign would have been quite so sensational in its success if he had been pursued from place to place by a band of Bulgarians intent on howling him down. All Liberals were now suspect. Scott himself escaped the charge of treachery freely brought against most Liberals, and was convicted only on the minor counts of stupidity and cowardice. ‘There is great virtue in silence,’ wrote one of his critics (December 6, 1911). ‘What a man cannot appreciate he cannot

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justly criticise. You are incapable of criticising our views, and I ask that you will show your good sense by refraining from discussing them.'

Scott thus spent much of his time arguing with the militants on one side and with opponents or fair-weather friends on the other. In December he discussed the position with Mr Lloyd George.

*Private Papers: Dec. 2/1911*

Breakfast—December 2, 9.15–10.45. Alone at first, (with Mrs Ll. G. and the elder daughter) afterwards Chief Whip came in and later Donald of the *Chronicle* for golf. We talked almost entirely of the Women's Suffrage movement and the damage done to it by the militant outrages. I regretted Grey's letter in yesterday's paper practically throwing up the sponge if there should be a continuance of these proceedings, and said I supposed it was written from a sense of loyalty (exaggerated as I thought) to Asquith on his being attacked by the militants—a non Suffragist by Suffragists—and was glad to hear that this was the case since it gave the letter only an incidental importance. As a matter of fact the militants did not attack Asquith as an anti-Suffragist at all and liked him better than many of the Suffrage members of the Government, but simply as a member of the Government.

'But what can they hope to achieve by attacking him?' he asked, 'They can't expect to make him change his mind.'—'Oh! yes, they do; they are quite hopeful of converting him.' (I had this the previous day from Brailsford)—'Then they must be mad.'—'They are mad . . . '—'It's just like going to a lunatic asylum,' said George, 'and talking to a man who thinks he's God Almighty.'—'Yes, very much like that.'

Afterwards we discussed what should be done. I urged that the militants should be ignored and the Suffrage campaign pressed on as though they didn't exist. 'That's all very well for us,' said G., 'though it's difficult; I don't mind and it doesn't put me out much at meetings or irritate me. I'm used to the rough and tumble and have had to

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fight my way; so is Churchill (though he is sensitive about his perorations), but it's different with Grey; he isn't accustomed to interruption and can't do with it. But what really matters is the effect on the audiences and on the public. At Bath I had very hard work. The people were already irritated with previous interruptions when I rose to speak; my task of persuasion was made very much more difficult.'<sup>1</sup> I replied that that was no doubt the case, but we were in for a fight and must go through with it. The public would, of course, be furious; the problem was to turn their fury into the right channel. At present they said 'these people are Suffragists; let us wreck the Suffrage'; the reply was 'Not at all; they are Suffrage-wreckers; let us disappoint them.' He agreed, but said it wasn't easy. 'Anyway,' I replied, 'it's the best we can do; besides, after a bit people will get used to the interruptions, and when it is seen that we are going steadily on and fighting for the Suffrage and that they, professed Suffragists, are attacking and hindering us for doing it, the thing will become absurd and really laughable and the public will back us and help us to defeat them.' George agreed but doubted if Grey and people like that would have resolution to go through with it. 'Well, anyway,' I said, 'you've got to.' 'I see what you mean,' he replied, 'it's the compulsion of my temperament.' 'Exactly.' 'And that's the worst kind of compulsion.' So there we left it.

Incidentally several facts emerged. Murray said he had been approached by a member who wanted him to help to get up a manifesto by members who had voted for the Conciliation Bill, declaring that if the militant outrages didn't stop they would vote against the Bill and who had got a score or so of signatures. Murray said he couldn't help as Chief Whip, especially as he himself had voted against the Conciliation Bill, so the man went away to get more signatures. Lloyd George also mentioned that he had

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally he mentioned that the unlucky phrase about 'torpedoing' the Conciliation Bill was an impromptu—'It wasn't even on my notes'—The speech was almost unprepared. The day he had intended to give to it had been absorbed by the Insurance Bill and there remained only one morning.

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been in communication with a body of about sixty members headed by Henderson, who were all prepared to take part in a Suffrage campaign in the country, and that after the outrages began the whole thing came to a dead stop. George and Grey are engaged to address a meeting of the Liberal women Suffragists on December 16th. George is doubtful whether Grey will now attend. I pressed him to promise and address a Free Trade Hall Meeting in Manchester in January (I had written already on behalf of the National Union people in Manchester, but he doesn't answer letters), but he wouldn't commit himself at once—evidently wanted to see a little how things developed. I am to see him again next week.

Conciliation, inside or outside the Cabinet, was not made easier by the language used by Asquith on December 14 when receiving an anti-suffrage deputation. He said that the inclusion of women in the franchise Bill would be 'a political mistake of a very disastrous kind.' What Morley thought of the predicament of the Government is shown in a letter he wrote to Scott.

*Private*

FLOWERMEAD,  
WIMBLEDON PARK, S.W.

*January 20, 1912*

MY DEAR SCOTT,

I warmly appreciate the particularly kind way in which you put your wish that I should speak at the Albert Hall on the 23rd of next month. I fear I cannot persuade myself that either speech or presence would do any good. The issue seems to me to have been placed in a singularly unfortunate position. How the thing is to be disentangled with decent credit either to the Government or to Parliament, I cannot for the life of me make out. I need not dilate upon all this to you, who must, I think, see the mishandling of matters as clearly as I do. Time and a little more circumspection in important places, may bring daylight, but for my own part I have nothing to say that is to-day worth listening to.

Yours always sincerely,  
M.

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The first effect of time, to which Morley looked for relief, was to add new confusion. Certain suffragist members of the Cabinet, and some of the Liberal newspapers, anxious to ease the internal difficulties of the party, began to toy with the idea of adding to the suffrage amendments to the Reform Bill provision for a referendum. Scott, acting with Mr Brailsford and the leaders of the National Union, attacked this proposal with great vigour, and he was active with interviews and letters. He wrote to Mr Lloyd George saying that if the Government adopted this plan it would 'prove itself at once treacherous and nerveless'. The proposal was dropped, but rumours followed that the Government meant to substitute a Plural Voters Bill for the promised Reform Bill, and to leave the suffragists to make what they could of the Conciliation Bill. For some time there was great anxiety on this point, but in the end the Bill was not dropped but only postponed. The effect of the postponement was that the Conciliation Bill came before the House of Commons first. Just before its introduction, Mr Lloyd George, speaking in the Albert Hall, with Mrs Fawcett in the chair, declared that 'failing his own solution of the Suffrage question by a wide amendment of the Government Reform Bill, he would feel bound to support the Conciliation Bill in spite of his dislike to it.'

The fate of the Conciliation Bill was settled on the 28th of March, when the measure that had been carried on second reading in the previous year by a majority of 167, was defeated by 14. Mr Lloyd George, who had voted against the Bill in 1911, voted on this occasion in its favour. Opponents had increased from 90 to 229. Sixty-nine more Unionists, forty-four more Liberals, and twenty-six more Nationalists had voted against the Bill.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The figures were as follows:

Strength of parties after 1910 election	Voting May 1911			Voting March 1912	
	For	Against	...	For	Against
Liberals ..... 271	135	35	...	118	74
Unionists ..... 272	62	46	...	64	115
Labour ..... 42	27	0	...	25	0
Nationalists ... 84	33	9	...	3	35

In March 1912 there were 158 members absent unpaired.

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As the year went on the prospects of carrying an amendment to the Reform Bill declined. Even Scott was depressed, and his depression was reflected in the leader he wrote (July 9, 1912) on the debate on the second reading.

We do not know whether the present House of Commons will be prepared to do justice to women. A few months ago there can be little doubt that it would, and nothing that has since happened supplies any adequate reason for a change of purpose. The follies and excesses of a small section of women, deeply resented and regretted by the vast majority of women, ought not to be allowed to weigh in the balance against a claim which has been admitted to be just, and which the circumstances of the time and the introduction of this Bill make doubly urgent.

He added a few sentences on this claim, of which we may say that if their truth had been grasped by the Liberal Prime Minister and the Liberal party, England would have escaped a dangerous and damaging chapter in her public life.

It is one which appeals to the very root principles of a well-founded Liberalism, and it has met with a quick response from that other new and transforming force, the awakening power of organised labour. It may seem a small matter to refuse it recognition at a moment when it has been prejudiced by the extravagance of a few of its supporters, but it is not a small matter. Liberalism lives, and only desires to live, by ideals and by principles. Not all the votes of all the plural voters can do it a tithe of the damage which it will receive at the hands of its friends if, when put to the test, as shortly they will be, they make the great refusal.

Whilst criticizing the militants, Scott also vigorously attacked the handling of the Bill by the Prime Minister (July 13). After describing the injustice that would be involved in proceeding with the Bill if a Suffrage amendment were defeated, he went on: 'It is necessary to speak plainly on this subject, because we regret to see that the attitude of the Prime Minister is hardening. He does not in this matter



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share the view of the majority of the Cabinet and the majority of the Liberal party inside the House of Commons, and we believe undoubtedly in the country also. He selected two strong opponents of the enfranchisement of women to move the first and second readings of the Franchise Bill, and he yesterday affected to treat the whole question of the inclusion of women in the Bill as having been virtually settled by the adverse vote some months ago on the Conciliation Bill. That is a departure, greatly to be regretted, from the fair and—for an opponent—even generous attitude he has hitherto taken up on this contested question. It is not consistent with this attitude, or we must say, with any profession of neutrality, that he should use the great authority derived from his position as Prime Minister and leader of the party to prejudice the House of Commons in favour of his own view, which is not the view of the majority of the party. The vote on the Conciliation Bill was largely a catch vote. The majority against it barely exceeded the number of the miners' members who were compulsorily absent on that day and who would every one have voted for it. Mr Asquith may, of course, prove to be right and women may be excluded from the Bill. But in that case the heaviest condemnation from the point of view of Liberal principle will have been passed upon it, and we can only wish it short shrift and speedy burial.'

The Reform Bill (known officially as the Franchise and Registration Bill) passed its second reading on July 13, by a majority of 72, but the fate of Women's Suffrage remained in suspense for six months, as the next stages of the Bill were not taken till January 1913. Opponents used the interval to spread a rumour that if a suffrage amendment were carried Asquith would resign. As the fall of the Government would mean the loss of the Parliament Act and Home Rule, a number of members who were in favour of Women's Suffrage were certain to vote against an amendment that might have this catastrophic effect. This rumour had already influenced the Irish vote on the Conciliation Bill.

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Scott, on October 11, argued in his paper that it would be 'insulting' to Mr Asquith to attach any importance to this rumour. At the same time he took steps to obtain an open denial. He wrote to Sir Edward Grey urging that some statement should be made to counteract this mischievous report, and received the following answer.

*Private*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON

*November 29, 1912*

MY DEAR SCOTT,

I understand the arrangement to be that the House of Commons is to have an opportunity of deciding without any interference on party lines by the Government, whether, and if so, in what form, Women's Suffrage is to be put into the Franchise Bill: and that the Prime Minister's promise is that, if the House of Commons does put Women's Suffrage into the Bill, the Government will accept the decision of the House, and give effect to it in a Government measure.

It has never occurred to me as possible that it would be consistent with this promise for the Prime Minister to resign if the decision of the House of Commons was adverse to his opinion.

I should feel very great reluctance to vote for the Third Reading of a Bill which would in practice extend the Parliamentary Franchise still further to men, unless some Parliamentary Franchise was at the same time given to women: to pass a Bill for men only would make the position of women still worse than it was before.

If, therefore, it were the case that the Government is to be broken up if Women's Suffrage be put into the Bill, the natural corollary would be that I and others who are in favour of Women's Suffrage should leave the Government and vote against the Third Reading if Women's Suffrage be not put into the Bill.

It is only on the assumption that, if Women's Suffrage is put into the Bill, the Government, which term of course includes the Prime Minister, will accept the decision, that I can promise in advance to accept the decision of the House,

## C. P. SCOTT

and to continue to support the Bill, if Women's Suffrage is not put into it.

Nevertheless, I see no reason why you should not approach the Prime Minister direct, if you are in doubt.

Yours sincerely,  
E. GREY<sup>1</sup>

Scott wrote to Mr Asquith as suggested :

*December 5, 1912*

DEAR MR ASQUITH,

Will you forgive me for troubling you about a matter which is causing deep anxiety to many of us which you alone can remove. A statement is going from mouth to mouth in the House of Commons and elsewhere to the effect that, in case any of the amendments to the Franchise Bill in the interests of Women's Suffrage should be accepted you would, or might, resign. Personally I utterly discredit all such reports. Throughout this difficult controversy you have shown a fairness and generosity towards those who differ from you in opinion which convinces them that you will continue to hold the scales evenly till the end. You undertook that the whole matter should be left to the unfettered judgment of the House without respect of party and that the Government would accept and act upon its decision whatever this might be. But if there were reason to suppose that you would regard your personal position as being involved in the decision, then clearly the question would not be an open one. The whole weight, both of party interests and of personal attachment to yourself, would be thrown into the scale and there can be no doubt which way it would tip. The report is not mere gossip which can be ignored. I am assured (and indeed I know from personal experience) that it is being repeated by persons of authority. It is undoubtedly affecting the mind of the party in the House of Commons and, if the impression be not removed, it will equally affect the voting. It seems to be essential, therefore, that it should be

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Grey did his best to kill the rumour by sending a letter to be read at a suffrage demonstration in Glasgow on December 9, stating: "There is no truth in the report that if a Women's Suffrage amendment to the Reform Bill were carried it would be followed by a resignation which would break up the Government."

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

contradicted on authority, and I shall be very grateful if you will allow me to do this.

Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

Mr Asquith sent the following reply:

*Private*

10 DOWNING STREET, S.W.

December 9, 1912

MY DEAR SCOTT,

I have your letter of the 5th. I do not feel called upon to take any notice of the rumours to which you refer, and which are circulated without my authority.

My declarations, as head of the Government, as to what the attitude of the Government will be, extend over more than four years and are, I believe, perfectly plain and consistent.

But I feel bound to add this. Some of my most valued colleagues and friends, such as the Lord Chancellor and Sir Edward Grey, are active promoters of woman suffrage, and one of them has even made himself responsible for the principal amendment under this head to the Government Bill. In these circumstances, holding the views which I do hold, I cannot regard myself (as an individual) as being under any obligation to adopt a purely passive part, or to conceal in any way my opinion on the merits of the question from friends who are interested in knowing them.

I write with the more freedom, as I write in confidence.

Yours sincerely,  
H. H. ASQUITH

Scott made a personal appeal to Redmond when the Bill was to come before Parliament, and he left an account of his interview.

*Private Papers: Jan. 20/13*

I put it to him that it would be a horrible position for Home Rulers like myself to be torn between our allegiance to Home Rule and our determination to resist the ruin of the Suffrage cause—to desire the success of the Government on the one ground and its defeat on the other; but

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that undoubtedly that was what would happen if the suffrage amendments were defeated and the Bill afterwards persisted in—that moreover if they were defeated by Irish votes we should feel that there had been a betrayal by the Home Rule party of the very principle of Home Rule and that emancipation for Irishmen had been purchased at the cost of its refusal for Englishwomen. Our allegiance would be shaken and our ardour cooled.

He admitted that he was conscious of this and he earnestly hoped that such a situation would not arise. At the same time he had to look at the alternative. For the Prime Minister, who had denounced women's suffrage as a 'national disaster' to be compelled not only to accept it but to press it through under the exceptional powers of the Parliament Act would be an impossible position. There was no mandate for it from the country which could justify the use of the Parliament Act. I replied that Mr Asquith could not have thought so or he would not have given his pledge. R. replied that he could not imagine why he had given it, but evidently felt that at all events he must be relieved from the necessity of fulfilling it.

But all Scott's efforts to improve the chances of a suffrage amendment were a waste of energy. The procedure agreed on was that an amendment standing in Sir Edward Grey's name, to omit the word 'male' from the first clause of the Bill, should be taken first. When and if that passed then 'three rival amendments giving votes respectively to all, to many, and to a few women' would be discussed and voted on. The Grey amendment was duly moved on January 24, 1913. But on the same day the Speaker, in reply to Mr Bonar Law, who asked whether certain Government amendments, dealing with registration, were in order, made an ominous pronouncement, for, whilst refusing to give a ruling about the Government amendments, he added, 'There are also the other amendments regarding female suffrage, which of course would make a huge difference in the Bill if they were inserted.' What did 'a huge difference' mean? The question was answered on January 27, when in reply to

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the Prime Minister, the Speaker gave it as his opinion that 'though the Grey amendment to the Franchise Bill was immaterial, because by itself it would be inoperative, yet if any one of the three subsequent women's amendments, which are operative, were carried, he should have to rule that the Bill had become a new Bill and would have to be withdrawn and reintroduced in its amended form before it could be proceeded with.' The precedents, relied on by the Government and their advisers, of the suffrage amendments to the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884, were not, according to the Speaker's ruling, relevant, since both those bills enfranchised new bodies of electors, whereas this Bill contained no provision for enfranchising any new class of persons, although, by its provisions for amending the registration laws, it might incidentally put on the register a good many more persons, belonging to classes already enfranchised.

When this ruling had been given Asquith withdrew the Bill. A charge of bad faith was, not unnaturally, brought against the Government by exasperated Suffragists, but apart from the improbability that even the most violent anti-Suffragists in the Cabinet could have courted such a blow to the Government's prestige, it is now clear from the Speaker's *Commentaries* that Mr Lowther acted entirely on his own initiative. Why the Government had failed to consult the Speaker, or why the Speaker allowed Women's Suffrage to be discussed on the second reading, remain mysteries. A prominent member of the Government told Scott that the decision of the Speaker was entirely unexpected. 'Speaker had not made up his mind himself till, being challenged by Law as to whether Government amendments would not invalidate Bill, it occurred to him that much more would the Women's Suffrage.'

During this time of tension Scott had to bear with the blunders and reproaches of both sides. He lived with his usual composure in a world of bitter recriminations. The suffragists had a strong case against the Government. A Conciliation Bill had passed its second reading by a large majority in 1911, and, though the Government had agreed

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that if the House wanted women to be enfranchised facilities should be given, enfranchisement seemed no nearer. The Government's own plan for taking the sense of the House on principle and method had come to nothing, and the Government had made no effort to repair the effects of the Speaker's unexpected decision. They stood convicted of incompetence, and if they were suspected of worse they had only themselves to blame. On the other hand Liberal suffragists could complain that their efforts, both inside and outside the House of Commons, had been gravely and wantonly hampered by the violence of the militants. Scott, as usual, was chiefly concerned with the future. He despaired of the existing Parliament, but he had confidence in Grey and Mr Lloyd George, and he hoped that they would refuse to join any Liberal Cabinet in future that would not accept this reform. All his efforts were to be used to persuade the Liberal party to put the enfranchisement of women on its programme for the next election.

These plans, with many others, were upset by the War, which had in this respect the opposite effect from that of the last great struggle of its kind. In 1789 Parliamentary Reform seemed near at hand with Pitt and Fox both in its favour. The French Revolution and the French War postponed it till 1832. But whereas the French War turned supporters into opponents, the German War turned opponents into supporters. 'Do you propose to rebuild your house in a hurricane?' said a statesman when dismissing the argument for reform in the French War. In the German War the violence of the time prompted a different conclusion. For it was held that anybody who helped in a hurricane should be allowed to serve the State when the hurricane was over. In February 1918, after a Speaker's Conference, which had reviewed the whole subject of the Reform of Parliament, Women's Suffrage passed into law.

## CHAPTER IX

### IRELAND

THE second question on which Scott tried to help the cause of peace was the Irish question.

To understand the last phases of this tormenting problem it is necessary to grasp the changes that had come over it since 1886 when Scott first made up his mind in favour of Home Rule.

In 1886 the Irish question was not one question, but three: Irish Government, Irish land, Ulster. Gladstone offered to consider the special treatment of Ulster, but at that time his opponents were certain that they could defeat his whole scheme, and the offer elicited no answer. All their energies were concentrated on the resistance to Home Rule as a measure threatening the unity of the Empire, resistance bringing into play all the strongest emotions and passions in human nature. If you could defeat Home Rule altogether there was no motive, either in the calculations of party tactics or the larger considerations of policy, for accepting a compromise in order to save Ulster from a danger that would never arise.

In 1912 the situation was different. Irish land had been settled. For purposes of party conflict the battle over Ireland was still the battle over Home Rule. But in the minds of far-seeing men on both sides, and in the inner circles of politics, the Irish question was now the Ulster question, for the demand for Home Rule could no longer be considered, even by men who wished still to see it in that light, as a mere whim or caprice which the Irish people cherished to-day and would forget to-morrow. This meant that the Irish question had at last reached a state in which a solution by agreement was possible.

If the Opposition had been led by Peel and Wellington at this moment, a settlement would have been made, for they established the tradition which had kept resistance to change



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in England within definite limits. In the case of Catholic Emancipation, the Reform Bills, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, a time arrived when men who were strongly opposed to a particular change decided that it was more dangerous to the public welfare to continue to resist that change than to attempt by settlement to limit the mischief it might cause. On this view disorder admitted as a method of political warfare was worse than a bad measure. This convention had important results. Continental observers used to contrast our peaceful evolution with the disturbed history of other countries. The franchise had been widely distributed, the Corn Laws had been repealed, the whole burden of taxation had been shifted (in 1830 the first Sir Robert Peel's estate of £900,000 paid in estate duties less than three per cent), and yet there had been no violence. We had no 'forty-eight' or rather our forty-eight was like a game played in the nursery with tin Redshirts. The classes had conceded this and that, the masses had waited for this or that, without any protest that upset the convention on which parliamentary government rested.

The Irish question brought the first great breach with this tradition. With the support of the Unionist leaders, a great campaign of violence was organized, and a Government set up in Ulster. The results of the breach were soon apparent. At the Buckingham Palace Conference held in July 1914, under the shadow of impending disaster, it was found impossible to settle the gravest problem ever presented to British statesmen, not because the problem was too difficult, but because the passions that had been excited had deprived the leaders of their independence. Ultimately the Conference broke down over a question that seemed a trifle—how to place a few parishes in Tyrone and Fermanagh, which were one year more green than yellow, and another year more yellow than green. But neither Redmond nor Carson could afford, or thought he could afford, to surrender a few square miles, or rather neither of them thought he could afford to ask his party to concede that trifle. Neither of the English leaders was strong enough to force reason on his ally.

In the autumn of 1913 Loreburn, who had left the Government the year before for reasons of health, wrote a letter to

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*The Times* suggesting a conference on the Irish question. He had consulted Scott, who supported his plea in a leading article in the *Manchester Guardian* on September 12, 1913. Leaders on both sides gave a guarded welcome in their speeches to the idea of a negotiation. On November 24, Loreburn published some detailed proposals in the *Manchester Guardian*. He withheld his name because he knew that a good many Liberals had never forgiven him his determination to keep the appointment of magistrates outside the atmosphere of party. Influenced probably by his friendship with Lansdowne, who as a southern Unionist disliked the idea of separating Ulster, Loreburn proposed a rival scheme for Home Rule within Home Rule. Ulster was to have a special Minister sitting in the Irish Parliament; no Irish Act was to apply to Ulster unless supported by the majority of Members of Parliament for the Protestant area of Ulster; patronage was to be in the hands of a special body. Scott supported the proposal, and discussed it with men of all schools. A few of the letters received on the subject show how great were the difficulties that had to be met.

*Private*

THE PALL MALL GAZETTE,  
November 25, 1913

DEAR MR SCOTT,

I only came back here this morning—hardly ever working on Mondays—to find your kind note and yesterday's interesting letter in the *Manchester Guardian*. If 'Home Rule within Home Rule' were anything like a present solution your correspondent's scheme would be encouraging as a basis. The Unionist party would not look at it unless something worse actually happened than they at present anticipate. They feel bound to Ulster too; and the Covenant has been signed there. That signing was a very grave moral event. I don't believe that until the last extremity the Covenanters will accept anything short of total exclusion, so it now looks like a return to old positions, and heaven knows what may happen before a public mood as good as that which prevailed after Lord Loreburn's letter will return again. I do not feel gay, though all party-men seem cheerful.

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There I try to state the facts. Now for my personal position as a man of lonely mind on this question. Your correspondent in the last lines does not apply Hegel's great word which touches the very soul of the Irish trouble: 'Tragedy is the conflict not of right and wrong but of right and right.' The very colour of men's natures is still determined in Ireland by feelings deriving from the real and necessary antagonisms of thoughts and swords in the seventeenth century. The psychological problem, not touchable by administrative compromise tempering spiritual surrender, is what your correspondent ignores. Ireland is *not* made yet. It will never be made unless it becomes, like Scotland, Composite rather than Celtic. The inclusion policy in any shape would be felt as a triumph of the Nationalists. Why, why should they force an arrangement as distasteful to the Ulster Community as present British Government is to them? The essential thing is a new era of peace and goodwill. It cannot come merely by legislation, no matter how ingeniously qualified. The fruits of the Parliament Act cannot rival the divine birth and the star; peace and goodwill can only come gradually by saving honour on both sides, and I don't believe that anything good can come except by leaving Ulster out, and trusting to the effect of all the forces which will then be compelled to work for later inclusion. . . .

Yours sincerely,  
J. L. GARVIN

A few weeks later Scott received a letter from Dillon, who had been alarmed by Loreburn's letter and all that had followed it.

2 NORTH GT. GEORGE'S STREET,  
DUBLIN, 5 *January*, 1914

MY DEAR SCOTT,

I was very glad to get your letter this morning. I had been thinking for some time of writing to you—amongst other things—for the purpose of remonstrating with you about the attitude of the *Manchester Guardian* for the last three months!

There can be no doubt that the Ulster question is *now* a

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very serious one—*very* much more serious than it would ever have been but for Lord Loreburn's letter and the speeches of Winston Churchill.

Up to the date of the appearance of Lord Loreburn's letter all our information went to show that Carsonism was on the wane in Ulster. And I am convinced that it was beginning to dawn on the Covenanters that the Carson policy was a flat failure and had utterly failed to impress the British public. And it had utterly failed to make an impression with public opinion in Great Britain favourable to the Ulster position. You must always keep in mind the fact that when the Ulster business started, not one in ten of the Covenanters had the faintest idea that it would ever really come to fighting. They were told and believed that their warlike preparations and their threats would stampede the British public—which is looked upon by *all Irishmen* as a very ignorant and easily gullible animal. Last summer and up to August there was a slump in Carsonism, and if the peace-makers had held their hands, about now there might have been a chance of real peace.

But Loreburn's letter, followed by the gatherings at Balmoral and the Dundee speech, acted precisely as a can of petroleum thrown on the dying embers of a fire would act. And the Ulster gang blazed out into full activity, now fully convinced that the policy of bullying was a complete success and that the Liberal party and its leaders were thoroughly frightened. The result has been that Carson's policy is now looked upon as thoroughly successful and justified. And the Ulstermen have committed themselves and will commit themselves far more deeply than they would ever have done had it not been for Lord Loreburn, Churchill, etc.

And there is always the danger in a game of bluff, that men who are not cowards may find themselves so deeply committed that they cannot decently turn back or give in. And, of course, the Ulstermen—like all other sections of the Irish people—are not cowards, but on the contrary are quite ready for a fight, even for no other reason than to save their faces.

Another and most serious element of danger and difficulty

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has been added to the situation by Larkinism. And the astounding folly of the Labour Leaders in Great Britain, and I must add the Radical Press, in supporting and making a hero of this gentleman. That is too big a subject to enter on. All I will say is that enormous mischief has been done. And the ignorance of the realities of the situation in Ireland—by the Radical Press—has been a revelation even to old campaigners like myself.

I do not expect to go to London until the week before the House meets—probably about Wednesday, 5th February. And I should very much like to take Manchester on my way if convenient to you. Let me know if you will be at home during the week before Parliament meets, and I shall write again, as soon as I know what my movements will be.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN DILLON

Scott explained his views to Dillon a little later.

*March 22, 1914*

MY DEAR DILLON,

I, too, should much like to see you (though I'm rather fast here at present) for it distresses me that you should be distressed by anything we have said or omitted to say. I should like to get to the bottom of this, for with an old friend like you perfect frankness is easy. We have, of course, taken right through and deliberately a strictly non-partisan and non-provocative attitude. It seemed the only chance of getting a settlement by consent, and besides in a big matter like this it is the only one which seems tolerable. But I don't think that weakens our position; I think it greatly strengthens it, and it enables us to carry with us a mass of moderate opinion, even Conservative opinion, which otherwise would not be touched. But I am not aware that we have given away a single point which mattered, although the Tory papers have been able to cull here and there small points on which we have not sung absolutely in chorus. That is inevitable if you are to speak frankly, and frank speaking is, I think, what is wanted. My impression is that we have now as a party an immensely strong position, and that the Tories know it is

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shown by the kind of fury which is seizing them. If they hold up the Army Bill, which is, I think, clearly contemplated by the wilder men who push on their weak leaders now as they did four years ago, we shall smite them hip and thigh, and it will be the most desperate general election ever fought in this country. But we shall pass Home Rule first.

Yours very sincerely,

C. P. SCOTT

On the other hand, a letter from his old friend, Sir Samuel Dill, now Professor at Belfast, showed how serious were the difficulties in Ulster.

ULSTER CLUB, BELFAST,  
*December 12, 1913*

MY DEAR SCOTT,

Will you pardon me, who from my profession cannot be a politician, for sending you a note of warning as to this terrible Ulster business. If I were a politician, I should work for a united Ireland such as, but for old feuds and hatreds, might be realised. I sit on boards in Dublin with Catholics and Nationalists and we are the best of friends, and never have anything more unpleasant than chaff.

But I must tell you, with the deepest pain, that this Ulster uprising is really serious. It is not bluff. Close to my house hundreds of men, rich merchants and artisans, are drilling and marching every night. The servants in this club are out every night with rifles. To the observer in England it all seems absurd. But if you were here you would not think so. The selfish materialism of Belfast, as it used to be, has been transmuted into a fanaticism which, though you and I cannot sympathise with it, is a tremendous force. These men, believe me, are ready to sacrifice everything rather than submit. I have often coolly suggested to them what a financial panic here will mean if there is anything like civil war. And old men, with vast interests at stake, say they have counted the cost and are ready to pay it.

It is all so sad. And I only write to you, as an old friend, at the head of such a powerful paper, to warn

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you not to be misled by reports casting ridicule on a movement which is, I am sorry to say, very serious.

Excuse me for troubling you.

Yours sincerely,  
S. DILL

The Scott-Loreburn scheme was abandoned and the effort to reach Irish peace was made by the other method of excluding Ulster. Scott discussed this method with men of all parties, Mr Geoffrey Dawson, Mr Garvin, Dillon, Loreburn, McDonnell, Morley, and others. The record of his conversations shows how slight a difference separated parties. All on one side agreed that an Irish Parliament could not administer Ulster against its will; all on the other that Home Rule could not be averted. But there were great difficulties in detail, as we can see from Scott's conversations.

*Private Papers: Feb. 7/14*

Lunched with Dillon at Bath Club and had two hours with him. He argued strongly and persistently against any statement by the P.M. at this stage, of the particular concessions he was prepared to offer to Ulster. To do so, he said, would be (i) to create an impossible Parliamentary position. The Opposition would at once say 'We cannot consider these proposals till we see them in black and white in the form of clauses to the Bill. Produce your clauses.' Then, if clauses were produced, they would say 'Oh, but this is a new Bill. Withdraw your Bill; you admit it is unsatisfactory. At the least let the electors say whether they think so too.' Thus the demand for a dissolution would be greatly strengthened. The Opposition both in Parliament and in Ulster would be in the wildest spirits. 'Now,' they would say, 'at last we have got them on the run.' (ii) In Ireland the effect would be disastrous. Already, on the mere rumour of concession, protests pour in. If they were announced on authority, meetings and resolutions would follow, especially from the Ulster Catholics. 'Intolerable,' it would be said, 'that our Catholic archbishop (of Armagh) should be subject to Orange domination, and that Catholic education in the northern counties should be at the mercy of the same power.' Redmond could

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not stand against such protests. He would have either to declare against the proposed concessions or to remain silent in the house, which would be nearly as bad.

If on the other hand the concessions were only announced on the Suggestion Clause after the Bill was through Committee and was practically safe, then Redmond could always say, 'Well, I dislike the changes; I accepted them with the greatest reluctance, but they were the price I had to pay, and at any rate I have got the Bill.'

*Private Papers: Apl. 28/14*

Dillon called on me at my house, having been at meeting in Manchester previous evening. We spoke of landing of arms and other illegalities in Ulster on previous day. I said we had perhaps made mistake in not checking volunteer movement sooner. He dissented, and strongly deprecated any action even now which might lead to actual conflict between army and volunteers—fearing effect on future of Ireland. At the same time thought too much was being left to police, at least half of whom were in sympathy with Orangemen. . . . Thought they would do their duty so long as there was adequate military force behind them, but present force quite insufficient. Took very serious view of the Unionist campaign about the 'Ulster plot', fearing its effect on English public opinion and urging that the real plot of Unionists to suborn the army should be exposed and emphasised to counteract this. Described this plot as a Titus Oates plot over again in its absolute baselessness.

*Private Papers: June 23/14*

Breakfasted with Loreburn, and discussed Irish question. He asked for my views on the situation, as he felt bound to make a speech on the Second Reading of the Amending Bill, although reluctant to do so. Asked whether he wished to make an immediately practicable proposal on the basis of the Bill, or to put forward for what it might be worth the best solution. He replied emphatically the latter.

I said from that point of view there seemed to me there could be no doubt that Home Rule within Home Rule, which



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he had always favoured, was right, and that this should be coupled with such amendments to the Home Rule Bill as to bring it into harmony with a scheme of Home Rule all round. That is, the separate Customs and separate Post Office would be given up, and if it were possible the general basis of the Bill would be altered so that the powers conferred should be enumerated instead of the powers reserved being enumerated. That I thought it was possible on this basis that Ulster might be treated as a whole, which would conciliate the Covenanters in compensation for Ireland being treated as a whole, which would conciliate the Nationalists; that the settlement might in fact be based upon Ulster a province and Ireland a nation. He cordially concurred and pressed me to discuss the matter further next week before the Second Reading.

In July, a conference was held at Buckingham Palace with the Speaker as chairman in the hope of reaching a settlement of the differences that still blocked a settlement. The Government were represented by Asquith and Mr Lloyd George, the Opposition by Bonar Law and Lansdowne, the Nationalists by Redmond and Dillon, and the Ulster Unionists by Lord Carson and Captain Craig (now Lord Craigavon). The Conference met on July 21st, and broke up on the 24th, having failed to agree on the area to be excluded from the operation of the Home Rule Bill. When it is remembered that though the nation was still unaware of the danger in which the peace of the world stood at that moment, the men who argued this way and that about a few parishes in Tyrone and Fermanagh knew what perils lurked round the corner, this failure seems as difficult to understand as it is difficult to excuse.

To understand this failure is to understand those that followed it. As Scott gave more time and thought to the Irish question than to any other, discussing it at different times with the Irish leaders and the Liberal leaders, with Bonar Law and Lord Carson, and with leading Unionist journalists, a study of his papers throws a good deal of light on these events and their causes.

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The Irish difficulty looked less important than it was. On paper the whole trouble had been fined down to a matter of local detail. In fact there was an insuperable obstacle. It was the want of leadership.

The Nationalist leader had the same qualities and the same defects as Asquith. Redmond was a great parliamentarian, but, like Asquith, he thought too much in terms of parliamentary debate and lived too little in the atmosphere of Irish opinion. His hold on the public imagination of Ireland and his knowledge of its temper were both declining. His moral influence had suffered from revolts in his own party led by O'Brien and Healey, but it had been threatened more directly by the growth of Sinn Fein. Springing from small origins, Sinn Fein had begun to collect behind it all the moral and spiritual forces that had come to life with the literary and dramatic renaissance of the Irish genius. The Irish parliamentary party had spent most of its life in protest and resistance. It was living on a tired tradition which no longer interested Ireland as Parnell had interested her, and left out of account the new forces like the co-operative movement which Plunkett had brought to such success. Sinn Fein, eliciting the undeveloped resources of Irish vitality and confidence, had about it in comparison the air of a new power in public life. Redmond, distrusting this new temper, unable to come to terms with it, out of touch with the spiritual forces that had produced it—the work of thinkers like Griffith, poets like Russell, dramatists like Synge and Lady Gregory—felt that Sinn Fein was waiting for the first chance of upsetting his power as new Ireland had upset the power of O'Connell. He therefore dreaded any compromise that would put him at its mercy.

This would have mattered less if Lord Carson had been what most Englishmen thought him, a strong man. Englishmen, hearing of his monster meetings and his elaborate ceremonies, thought that his writ ran in Ulster. This was far from the truth. A leader is a man who can give orders to his followers to halt when they want to march. Lord Carson was not a leader in that sense. His rhetoric could excite his followers; his will could not control them. He knew that

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Home Rule could no longer be avoided, and that this unsettled question was a danger that threatened first the peace of the world and, when that peace had been broken, the cause of the Allies; but he could give no help to its solution because he could not take a stand against followers who knew less than he.

Thus the trouble over a few parishes in the North of Ireland was really the symptom of a deep-seated disease. The parliamentary genius of men like Redmond and Dillon, the rhetoric and debating power of Lord Carson, the brooding mind of Arthur Griffith, the passionate logic of De Valera, the rich imagination of Russell, the constructive wisdom of Plunkett, all these were powerful elements in the life of a nation, but Ireland had not produced a man strong enough to use these forces to make either a single society, or two societies that could live together. If the Irish leaders were not strong enough to impose a settlement on their followers, neither were the British leaders strong enough to impose a settlement on their allies. So peace was missed, with all its consequences to the two nations and to the world.

The breakdown of the Conference was followed by an event that was soon forgotten by England in the excitement of the war, but was remembered much longer in Ireland. For two years the organisers of the Ulster revolt had been smuggling guns into Ireland. The Nationalist leaders were afraid of the consequences if Southern Ireland followed this example, and for a long time Southern Ireland was as quiet and peaceful as Ulster was warlike and threatening. But the more active elements in the Sinn Fein movement had been getting more and more restive, and at this time guns were landed at Howth by the author of *The Riddle of the Sands*, Erskine Childers, who, starting as a Unionist, was by this time an ardent Nationalist. No strong measures had been taken against the gun-smugglers in Ulster, but in this case the customs officers interfered, a Dublin crowd was fired on by British soldiers, and three lives were lost in the streets. The people of Dublin were naturally indignant that the Government should treat the same incidents in Ulster with indulgence and in Dublin with severity. Scott, who had just

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returned from Germany, saw Dillon, and found him in a great state about this terrible blunder. Dillon said there was a general conviction in Ireland that the Government were deliberately dealing out different measure to Ulster and to the rest of Ireland.

A week later there was a sudden change in the Irish scene. On August 3rd Redmond, in a speech that was at once an act of courage and an act of foresight, brought Ireland into the war, not as the Poles and the Czechoslovaks were entering it, as subjects of a Power whom they could not resist, but as a free people taking its part in a struggle to secure freedom for others. The tragic sequel comes in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER X

### FOREIGN POLICY—I

AT the time of the Franco-German war Gladstone prophesied that either Europe would build up some kind of public law, or else the impulse given to violence by the seizure of Alsace-Lorraine and the success of Bismarck's methods would increase what he called the new mania for armed force and lead to war. The second of these alternatives followed inevitably on the failure of the first. For the next half-century Europe was ruled by fear. Bismarck, having got everything for which he had schemed, lived in fear. Every great Power in turn came into this atmosphere of fear. Every diplomatic combination that was formed, whether directed by Germany against France, by France against Germany, by Russia against Austria, or Austria against Russia, was formed and governed by fear. At last it became clear that every gain that man had made in the arts of civilisation was in danger from the violence that is inspired by fear. Gladstone had said that the creation of public law would be the greatest triumph of the age. Just because the age missed this triumph, the triumphs it won became a new source of fear, since each of them was more likely to be turned to the uses of war than to the preservation of peace. So the events that made war more to be dreaded made it more to be expected.

The war between France and Prussia was a landmark in another sense. Down to the late sixties the world seemed to be moving towards Free Trade. Cobden's Commercial Treaty of 1860 between England and France was followed by a network of similar treaties covering a great part of Europe. When Cavour died in 1861, and Cobden in 1865, those disciples of Adam Smith had good reasons for their confidence in the progress of his ideas. This encouraging prospect was destroyed by a series of events, of which the

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most important were the Civil War in America and the war between France and Prussia, which substituted List for Adam Smith as the teacher of the age. The nationalist spirit, inflamed by war and a new sense of insecurity, threw up tariffs as it threw up armies. The economic development of the world created a new medium for this militant spirit as the pressure of competition, with one country after another passing from a peasant to an industrial civilisation, made the struggle for markets fiercer and fiercer. At the end of the century this competition was quickening its step all over the world. Thus the peace of Europe was threatened by new ambitions as well as by old quarrels. Outside Europe, finance and commerce, inside Europe, race and history, these forces were producing a rivalry at once old and new, combining all that was dangerous in an age of tradition with all that was dangerous in an age of adventure. Europe looked back to Sedan and forward to the Baghdad railway.

The result exceeded Gladstone's worst forebodings, for the process at last produced the Europe of 1913, with Germany, Russia, Austria, and France straining every nerve to add to their monster armies, England and Germany building ship against ship, in a world so tense and nervous that no Power dared to stand alone, and yet no Power had a steady faith in those who stood beside it. Bismarck's treatment of Russia and Austria, under his system of insurance and reinsurance, was the extreme example of perfidy between allies. But apart from such trickery, Governments were so much on edge that we were uneasy when France and Germany put their heads together over Morocco; France trembled when Haldane packed his carpet slippers for a visit to Berlin; and France and England both gave Russia whatever she asked because neither of her allies could trust her out of her sight. At last the nightmare of universal war ended, but whereas most nightmares end when the victims learn that their fears are false, this nightmare ended when its victims learned that they were true.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr J. A. Spender's masterly book *Fifty Years of Europe*, gives a vivid and illuminating picture, based on a study of all the post-war documents, of the state of mind of Europe under the tension.

In 1870 Gladstone had described England, cut off not from duties but from temptations in Europe, acting as mediator in the quarrels of the Continent. How had it happened that the English people had been drawn into this system out of their isolation? To understand this revolution we must trace briefly a complicated series of events.

As early as 1887, the condition of Europe, with the Triple Alliance on the one side, and Russia and France acting together on the other, had alarmed Lord Salisbury into the belief that isolation was no longer safe. In that year he concluded with Italy a secret pact, which was afterwards extended to Austria, for the defence of our common interests in the Mediterranean and the Balkans. In describing this pact to Queen Victoria, Lord Salisbury said that though the entente with Italy left Great Britain free to give or to withhold 'material co-operation' it was as close an alliance as the parliamentary character of our institutions would permit.<sup>1</sup> When Lord Rosebery became Foreign Minister in 1892 he refused to recognise this agreement and it lapsed.<sup>2</sup>

Early in the twentieth century England definitely abandoned her tradition of isolation. For this change there were two broad arguments. The competition for openings in finance and commerce was becoming more severe all over the world.<sup>3</sup> In Asia, Near and Far, in Africa, North, South, East, and West, British Ministers found it more and more difficult to maintain British interests, hard pressed as they were by the industrial development of other Powers, when England had rivals in every sphere and friends in none. This sense of inconvenience had grown into a sense of danger during and after the South African War, for that war had ranged public sentiment in every country against us and had led directly to an alarming increase in the German navy. A German ship suspected of carrying contraband had been taken to Durban to a prize court, and though the British Government released the ship with more haste

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Queen Victoria*. Third Series. Vol. I, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *British Documents*, Vol. II, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> For a brilliant study of this element in the diplomatic competition of the nineteenth century, see Mr Brailsford's book *War of Steel and Gold*.

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than dignity, in answer to German protests, the incident enabled Tirpitz to push through the Reichstag the second Navy Bill, doubling at one stroke the programme laid down in his first. In a world wearing so harsh a face British Ministers began to look abroad for friends.

Our first actual engagement was prompted rather by the first of these reasons than the second. It was designed to protect British commerce in the Far East. This engagement gave us an ally outside Europe. In 1902 Lansdowne made a Convention with Japan under which each party undertook to go to war on behalf of the other if either party were attacked by two Powers. In 1905 this Convention was succeeded by an alliance under which each party undertook to come to the assistance of the other if either party were involved in war by the aggression of any other Power. In the second Treaty Japan undertook to recognise our special interest in India in return for our recognition of her special interest in Korea. How Salisbury, who at this time was a strong supporter of isolation, came to sanction the first of these undertakings (he resigned in July 1902 and died in August 1903) remains a mystery to be solved when his biographer reaches that chapter in his life.

The next step took us into the Continental system. It was obviously inspired rather by care for our safety than care for our commerce. Europe was living under the shadow of two great combinations: Germany, Austria, and Italy on the one side; on the other Russia and France. The British Government decided to attach itself to one of them. The first overtures were made to the Triple Alliance. Before the Boer War, Chamberlain had advocated an alliance with Germany both in public and in private, his private negotiations being embarrassed, as often happens in such cases, by his public speeches, for Chamberlain was impatient of the subtler methods of the diplomatist. In spite of discouragements due to the war and explosions of temper in both countries, a serious effort was made early in 1901 to bring Great Britain and Germany into alliance. It began with a meeting at Chatsworth between Chamberlain, Devonshire, and Eckhardstein, the First Secretary at the German Embassy, all three



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supporters of the project. Salisbury was ill at the time, but in May 1901 Lansdowne sent him a memorandum for the purpose of a discussion by six members of the Cabinet, Salisbury, Lansdowne, Chamberlain, Devonshire, Hicks Beach, and Balfour. Salisbury replied with an adverse memorandum, arguing that there was no danger in isolation, and that the new proposal would include Great Britain in the Triple Alliance. Lansdowne, who remained favourable, answered that the arrangement he proposed would be more like the agreement Salisbury himself had made with Italy in 1887.<sup>1</sup> However, the German Government would not accept anything less than a complete alliance: 'the whole or none', and the plan was killed. It was really killed by Holstein, who was convinced that Great Britain could never come to terms with France and Russia, and that in time she would be driven into the arms of Germany, when she would have to take what terms Germany chose to give her.

Chamberlain had said frankly to Eckhardstein that though he would prefer a German alliance to any other, he would look elsewhere if England and Germany could not come to terms. Salisbury's view that isolation was not a danger was not shared by most of the politicians and officials who had been engaged in foreign affairs. Hence the German refusal of the Anglo-German entente was followed by the French entente. Lansdowne, who had put the maintenance of the *status quo* in Morocco as among the common aims of Germany and Great Britain, now entered into an entente with France, of which the most important feature was the recognition of a special French interest in Morocco in return for a free hand in Egypt.

There are some agreements of which you can describe the effect by saying that two Powers who have been contending with each other in a particular field settle their differences and cease to be rivals. We had made such an agreement with France to put an end to the dispute that had followed Marchand's descent on Fashoda in 1898. By that agreement we drew a line like that drawn by the Pope in the fifteenth century to divide the New World between Spain and Portugal.

<sup>1</sup> *British Documents*, Vol. II, p. 77.

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East of the line France, west of the line England was to acquire neither territory nor influence. Many people at the time thought of Lansdowne's entente with France as comparable to this first instrument in character, though, of course, much more ambitious in scope and very much more cordial in temper. They thought of it, that is, as an extensive bargain putting an end to a whole series of controversies. This limited view would not have survived the study of the documents recently made public describing the earlier efforts of our Government to make an entente with Germany.

Few people realised at the time all that was implied in this new entente. It is curious that Cromer thought that we were asking from France more than we were giving her. He thought that she was giving us in Egypt something positive and immediate, whereas we gave her in Morocco something that she might never enjoy. It seemed to him that a free hand in Egypt meant more than a free hand in Morocco. Delcassé took a shrewder view. This happened to be one of those unusual cases in which a bird in the bush is worth more than a bird in the hand. No Power placed as France was in Morocco would stand still. With skill she could make each new advance an opportunity for calling upon our support, and each decision on our part to give that support would make it more difficult next time to stand aside. The view that we were giving France less than we asked was so far from the truth that within a few months of making the entente our Foreign Office was prepared to go to war for French claims in Morocco, the very claims which, if Germany had accepted our offers, we should have been bound by treaty to discountenance. In 1905, 1906, and 1911, we were within sight of a war of which it could be said that the ordinary Englishman would have known as little about its rights and wrongs as he would have known about the rights and wrongs of a civil war in Timbuctoo.

The only person who had foreseen this development from the first was Rosebery, but even Rosebery could hardly have foreseen the active part which Germany would play in producing it. When Delcassé made his agreement with us about Morocco he consulted Spain and Italy, and bought them off

by compensations in the recognised manner of diplomacy: Germany, perhaps deliberately, he ignored. Germany therefore had every ground for making a reasonable attempt to have her interests considered. Morocco was not in the eyes of the law the property either of Britain or of France. For the moment Germany acquiesced, but soon after the total defeat of Russia by Japan changed the balance of strength in Europe, and Bülow sent the Kaiser to Tangier to make an explosive speech. The Kaiser hesitated, but his taste for such rhetoric never needed much encouragement, and his first speech was soon followed by others, in one of which, speaking not far from the French frontier, he exclaimed: 'Hurrah for dry powder!' For some months there was acute tension between France and Germany, Germany pressing for a conference on Morocco, and France resisting. In June, Delcassé, who had offended some of his colleagues, and seemed to others tactless and dangerously unaccommodating, was compelled to resign. A solution was found by President Roosevelt, who persuaded France to agree to a Conference, undertaking to support her against unreasonable demands. A conference accordingly met at Algieras early in 1906, and reached a settlement by which France was given a police mandate within certain limits.

But the Algieras Treaty was less important than the other consequence that followed the Kaiser's intervention. A study of the British documents shows that it was in these months that the entente assumed a new character. It is hardly too much to say that Germany, trying to break up the entente, turned it into a defensive alliance. On general grounds there was a great deal to be said for holding a conference on Morocco, for obviously a general agreement would be better for Europe than the tension created by the rivalry of the Powers, but Lansdowne resisted the proposal even when France began to think of accepting it. He was in fact more French than the French.<sup>1</sup>

What was the explanation? The explanation was that Lansdowne feared that Germany, after bullying France into

<sup>1</sup> *British Documents*, Vol. III, p. 96. King Edward went so far as to telegraph to Delcassé, urging him not to resign. *Life of Lansdowne*, p. 342.

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dropping Delcassé, would bully her into dropping the entente. When Delcassé fell he wrote to a friend: 'the fall of Delcassé is disgusting and has sent the entente down any number of points in the market.'<sup>1</sup> The entente, that is, was not merely an arrangement for putting an end to our quarrels with France: it was an arrangement for putting an end to our isolation in Europe. It was not merely a friendly instrument between two neighbours: it was a political force affecting the balance of power. We were now in the Continental system, but whereas we had meant to enter it on the German side, events had so fallen out that we had entered it on the French.

Lansdowne himself deprecated more than once this view of the entente as it had been made by him and as it had left his hands. He described it as a friendly arrangement with France of such a kind as not to exclude a similar arrangement with Germany. But is that view compatible with his actual treatment of the Moroccan question in the autumn and summer of 1905? Was it possible to encourage France to resist Germany unless you were prepared to take the consequences if that advice led to open war? The danger of war was given such serious consideration that during Lansdowne's tenure of office there were military and naval consultations between the English and French.<sup>2</sup> The naval plans were discussed officially; about the military plans there is a discrepancy. Grey was given to understand that these conversations, unlike those about the fleets, were conducted through Colonel Repington; Sir William Robertson, on the other hand, said that they were official.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the truth on this point, it is obvious to anybody who has studied the volumes of the British Documents that the relations between Great Britain and France, when Balfour went out of office, were in spirit those of allies. Neither Power acted alone or

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lansdowne*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Grey: *Twenty-five Years*, Vol. I, p. 76. *Life of Lansdowne*, p. 488.

<sup>3</sup> *Soldiers and Statesmen*, p. 48. 'Lord Grey says discussions were carried on through the intermediary of the military correspondent of *The Times*, but to my personal knowledge they were also conducted, at least to some extent, direct.'

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without consulting the other; all the discussions between them on Morocco implied that they were bound to each other, and the military and naval conversations gave a special significance to the talk of diplomatic co-operation.

Was it possible that the entente could have been kept from becoming an alliance? We had done more in Morocco than renounce our claims in favour of France. We had in effect promised France our support not only in keeping what she held, but in pushing her claims further. If Germany had been moderate and conciliatory the development of Morocco might not have involved England in arrangements with France that implied military obligations, but Germany's methods of diplomacy excluded this solution. In the next nine years the ties that Lansdowne had formed were drawn tighter and tighter, until England became a recognised member of the Triple Entente. The next knot was tied within a few weeks of the change of government.

The anxious debates over Morocco, set in train by the Kaiser's speech at Tangier, lasted through the summer and autumn of 1905. On November 2nd Lansdowne received formal news that arrangements had been made for the conference to be held at Algeciras. A month later he went out of office, for Balfour resigned on December 4th.

Campbell-Bannerman's Government was formed on the 10th December. Parliament was dissolved and Ministers soon scattered to their constituencies.

At this inconvenient moment, Cambon, probably the ablest diplomatist of that day, chosen for that reason by Delcassé for his delicate task in England, approached Grey, the new Foreign Secretary, and asked whether the new Government would give France the support she had been led to expect from Lansdowne. This question raised an issue more momentous than the Education Bill, Chinese Labour, or Tariff Reform, and obviously the new Government should have considered it with the utmost care and deliberation in relation to its whole policy. Instead of this it was discussed in letters and fragments of conversations between two or three Ministers absorbed in their own elections. There is nothing to show that Grey consulted Lansdowne, and there was apparently

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hardly any oral discussion with Campbell-Bannerman. Cambon, the French Ambassador, went on to ask whether the military and naval discussions between the two countries which had begun under Lansdowne would be continued. Grey gave his sanction apparently without any misgivings. Campbell-Bannerman approved but had considerable misgiving.<sup>1</sup> These conversations became more and more intimate, a development that was certain with Haldane at the War Office, for Haldane was justly proud of the new army that he had created, and he enjoyed moving it about in imagination on the map of Europe, much as a child enjoys moving his tin soldiers in the nursery. Moreover, Haldane, so aptly described on one occasion by Campbell-Bannerman as stealing up the back stairs in carpet slippers, liked mystery for the sake of mystery apart from any advantage it might offer.

The trouble that had been composed for the time by the Algeciras settlement, broke out again in 1911 with such violence that the peace of Europe was more than once in the greatest danger. In this crisis Grey behaved as Lansdowne had behaved in 1905, treating it as the most important object of English policy that France should not be intimidated or appear to be intimidated by German pressure. In April 1911 the French sent an expedition to Fez, on the plea that disorder there threatened the safety of Europeans. This was an extension of French influence beyond the limits within which she held a police mandate under the agreement reached at Algeciras, and both Spain and Germany had cause to object. Spain landed troops at Larache, and occupied El Kasr; Germany sent a ship to Agadir. Grey told the German Ambassador that the despatch of the ship to Agadir had created a new situation, and that his Government would expect to be consulted in any new arrangement that might be made about Morocco.

Day after day passed without an answer. On July 21, Mr

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Ripon, February 2, 1906. 'The Secretary said that Cambon appears satisfied. But I do not like the stress laid upon joint preparations. It comes very close to an honourable undertaking: and it will be known on both sides of the Rhine.' Spender: *Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, Vol. II, p. 257; Grey: *Twenty-five Years*, Vol. I, p. 85.

Lloyd George, who was to speak that evening at the Mansion House, called on Grey and asked if any answer had been received. Hearing that no answer had come, he put before Grey a passage that he proposed to insert in his speech. Grey and Asquith agreed, and Mr Lloyd George delivered what was generally understood to be a public warning to Germany, a warning that led to violent protests in the German Press.

We may say of Germany that she often started with a good case and generally turned it into a bad one. Her action on this occasion was a good example. Grey had considerable sympathy with her, for he held that she was entitled to compensation in Africa for the great extension in recent times of British and French territory, but her hectoring methods seemed to him to raise a larger question. Just as Landsdowne was afraid, in 1905, that France might cease to trust the Entente and might turn away to Germany, so Grey held, in 1911, that our prestige in France was at stake, and that unless we held a firm tone, France might be drawn away into Germany's orbit, and we might find ourselves again a Power without friends. On this occasion all preparations were made for war, though the Cabinet knew nothing of them.

For this complicated situation was made more complicated by close secrecy. When Grey first sanctioned the military and naval conversations, Campbell-Bannerman suggested that the answer should be confirmed by the Cabinet. Grey did not respond, and a few days later he was summoned home to the death-bed of his wife, who had been thrown from her dog-cart, and the Cabinet was never held.<sup>1</sup> Thus between 1905 and 1911 the Cabinet as a whole knew nothing of the intimate relations that had been established between the soldiers and the sailors of the two countries.

Grey describes what happened in his book.

The Algeciras Conference crisis passed; the fact of the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Sanderson's minute to Sir F. Bertie's memorandum of January 13, 1906, about British support shows that he expected all the documents to go to the Cabinet. It was an unfortunate coincidence that Sanderson retired from the Foreign Office just after the new Government took office, and Grey lost the benefit of his experience. *British Documents*, Vol. III, p. 176.

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military conversations was not at that time made known to the Cabinet generally, but must subsequently have become known to those Ministers who attended the Committee of Imperial Defence. Nothing more respecting it appears in my papers till 1911. In January of that year there seems to have been a Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs. It consisted of Asquith, Morley, Lloyd George, Crewe, Haldane, and myself, but I have no recollection of whether this matter of the military conversations came before it.<sup>1</sup>

But in the summer of 1911 Asquith took alarm. Fairholme, our military attaché in Paris, sent a long account of a conversation he had with Joffre on the question of French strategy in the event of war, and the part that British troops should take in it. Asquith wrote to Grey, on September 5, 1911: 'Conversations, such as that between General Joffre and Colonel Fairholme seem to me rather dangerous; especially the part which refers to possible British assistance. The French ought not to be encouraged, in present circumstances, to make their plans on any assumptions of this kind.' Grey replied: 'It would create consternation if we forbade our military experts to converse with the French. No doubt these conversations and our speeches have given an expectation of support. I do not see how that can be helped.'<sup>2</sup>

In the autumn of 1911 the whole question of secrecy was brought before the Cabinet by Loreburn, who had learnt by accident of the preparations that had been made for war at the time of Agadir. He told Scott how he made the discovery and how he acted on it. Alfred Lyttleton was staying at his house and mentioned that the Unionist leaders had been asked by the Government whether they would support the Government if the Agadir dispute came to war. This was all new to Loreburn, though he concealed his ignorance from his guest. Loreburn was indignant, went to Morley and Harcourt, the two Ministers with whom he was most closely allied, and they all agreed that a protest should be made in the Cabinet

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty-five Years*, Vol. I, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.



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against the habit of secrecy at the Foreign Office. Morley raised the question at the meeting of the Cabinet on October 20, 1911, and a resolution was passed at his instance to the effect that there were to be no military conversations in future with any foreign Power without the knowledge of the Cabinet. Loreburn urged that all three Ministers should resign as a protest against the treatment the Cabinet had received in the past, but Harcourt put it that as the Cabinet had now obtained the securities they wanted, there was no case for resignation, and that any publication of the facts would have the effect of worsening our relations with Germany at the very time when they were beginning to mend. The German Government knew of the conversations, but not the German public, and the German military party would use such revelations to press their quarrel with England. In speaking of these incidents Loreburn put the blame for the secrecy upon Asquith, but this was unjust, for C.B. and not Asquith was Prime Minister when the conversations were sanctioned. Grey always tended to regard foreign affairs as a departmental matter, but it is surprising that so wise a man as Campbell-Bannerman did not press his first view that the original conversations should be discussed in the Cabinet.

Later in the Autumn, Grey read to the Cabinet an important minute by Sir Arthur Nicolson, describing the relations of the two Governments during the concluding stages of this long protracted conflict over Morocco.

*November 2, 1911*

SIR EDWARD GREY,

In conversation to-day with M. Cambon respecting the hitch which has occurred in the Franco-German negotiations, I mentioned that I believed that on a former occasion he had repeated to me the language which he had held at Paris in respect to the possible attitude of England in the event of a break occurring between France and Germany.

M. Cambon replied as follows 'I told M. Caillaux and all the Ministers very clearly that it would be exceedingly difficult for any British Government to take any action which was not supported by British public opinion: that in the

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event of Germany attacking France or wilfully breaking off the negotiations British public opinion would side with France and would enable the British Government to support France. British public opinion was impetuous and did not reason very deeply, but it had an instinctive sympathy with the party attacked and an instinctive mistrust and dislike of an aggressive and bullying Power. All British history proved this. But if France were to place herself in the wrong, and were to attack Germany or wilfully break off the negotiations, British public opinion, in any case at the outset, would not be on the side of France, and the British Government would not, therefore, be able to assist France at the commencement, whatever they might do later. As British aid would be required immediately and at the outset, the result would be that France would not be able to count on British support.

A.N.

M. Cambon states the position quite accurately.

E.G.

I read the whole of this to the Cabinet yesterday. It should be kept for reference.

E.G. 16/11/11<sup>1</sup>

Thus from November 1911 the whole Cabinet knew exactly how we stood with France: knew that the French had been told that if they were the injured party in the Morocco quarrel, British public opinion would enable a British Government to give them military aid. It is surprising that when Loreburn argued in his able and incisive book *How the War Came* that the Government had committed the nation to the support of France, he laid all the stress on the military conversations and passed over this much more definite assurance.<sup>2</sup>

The truth about the history of these years, and the development of a more compromising intimacy, was well put by Lansdowne speaking in the House of Lords on the

<sup>1</sup> *British Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 602.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to *The Times* shows that Loreburn, Harcourt, and Morley were all present at this meeting of the Cabinet.

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28th November 1911. 'Two Powers are brought together. They enter into closer relations. They accept commercial or political engagements affecting themselves only. Those obligations are honourably fulfilled. There can be no question of receding from them. The relations of the two countries become closer and more intimate, and in that way I think a condition of public sentiment does grow up in the face of which it becomes impossible for either Power to be entirely indifferent to the fortunes of the other. Each side, of course, retains its liberty of action. Your friend becomes entangled in foolish or Quixotic action. He must expect to be left in the lurch, but if he gets into trouble because he loyally observes the terms of his obligations, he will expect that you will not leave him to his fate.' It was the view of both Lansdowne and Grey that the attacks made upon France in Morocco by Germany were really directed against the entente. France on this view got into trouble because she loyally observed the terms of her obligations.

One more event must be noticed in the history of the development of our alliance with France. In 1912 the two Governments redistributed their fleets in such a way that Great Britain could concentrate in the North Sea and France in the Mediterranean. The importance of this arrangement it is difficult to overestimate. France could not leave her own shores unprotected unless it was understood that the English fleet would defend them. This rearrangement was followed by the exchange of the correspondence between Grey and Cambon of November 1912, which Grey read to the House of Commons in his famous speech on the outbreak of war. It is significant that Grey looked upon those letters as an admission on the part of France of England's freedom, whereas Poincaré looked upon them as an admission on the part of England of France's claims.

A review of these events shows how close we had come to France. What made our relationship with France a graver matter was that we had also entered into a new relationship with Russia. As early as October 1903, Lansdowne had hoped that the improvement of our relations with France

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would lead to the improvement of our relations with Russia, and just as Salisbury's arrangement with Italy in 1887 was extended to Austria, so a new arrangement with Russia followed our arrangement with France. The history of the two cases is in many respects similar. We wanted security for our Indian frontier, and for this reason Morley was as anxious as Grey for an arrangement with Russia. In this case Persia played the part that was played by Morocco in the other. We met Russia's demands in Persia by lavish concessions, but her character for perfidy stood so high that we were obliged to add concession to concession.<sup>1</sup> After giving her everything that we could regard as our own, we proceeded to satisfy her demands by giving her everything that was left to Persia. Finally, in the spring of 1914, Grey decided to allow our Admiralty to discuss plans with Russia. As Dr Gooch has well put it, we were thus conditionally involved in the quarrels and ambitions of a distant Power over whom we exercised no control.<sup>2</sup> To the end, our relations were difficult, and Poincaré, who was in Russia in July 1914, on the eve of the war, was seeking to persuade Russia to show more consideration to our Government.

Step by step we had left further and further behind us the independence that we had enjoyed in the days of our isolation. Nobody looking at the uneasy equilibrium on which the peace of Europe rested could enter, however gingerly, into that world without misgivings. We were driven into it by the fear that isolation, which had once meant independence, now meant the opposite. The grounds for that fear are well summarised in a Minute by Nicolson, written at the time of the Agadir crisis.

In the meantime we should not, in my opinion, give France any grounds for believing that our adhesion to the Triple Entente is in any way weakening. Were she to come to dis-

<sup>1</sup> Sazonoff wrote to the Russian Minister in Teheran: 'The English pursuing as they do vital aims in Europe will, if necessary, sacrifice certain interests in Asia in order to maintain their Convention with us. These circumstances we can naturally turn to our advantage.' H. Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart., First Lord Carnock*, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Modern Europe*, p. 499.

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trust us, she would probably try to make terms with Germany irrespective of us, while Germany who would soon detect our hesitation would be inclined to impose far harder terms than may be the case at present. In any case France would never forgive us for having failed her, and the whole Triple Entente would be broken up. This would mean that we should have a triumphant Germany, and an unfriendly France and Russia and our policy since 1904 of preserving the equilibrium and consequently the peace in Europe would be wrecked. Our naval position in the Mediterranean and elsewhere would be quite altered, necessitating increased naval estimates, while the cessation of our intimate relations with Russia would render our position in Central Asia unstable and insecure. We should even be brought to that position which the Emperor William recently outlined, and be going cap in hand to Berlin to ask what we could do to please him.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we were now as closely entangled as any of the other great Powers in the general system of fear, obeying the same impulses as the other victims of that system, nursing the same suspicions, pursuing the same manœuvres and dreading the same catastrophe.

<sup>1</sup> *British Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 386.

## CHAPTER XI

### FOREIGN POLICY—II

THE talk about our maintaining our friendship with France and discharging our treaty obligations, though well-meaning and well-sounding, is wholly irrelevant. No one has suggested that we should fall out with France or tear up our treaties. But surely we can be friends with a country without going to war when she does, nor is it necessary to strain a treaty beyond all recognition in order to observe our obligations under it. If one had to define the difference between an entente or a friendship, and an alliance, it would be this, that an alliance may bind two nations to make common cause, irrespective of their own interests or their own views on the merits of a particular dispute, whereas a friendship does not. Now the solid fact that is precipitated out of all the war talk is precisely this, that in some way or other our entente with France became an alliance. This change is not explicable by any British interest that we can discover.—*Manchester Guardian*, November 28/1911

When first our entente was made with France, Liberals took special pleasure in it. Some inherited the Gladstonian sympathy with France, some liked her democratic institutions, and all rejoiced that a dangerous quarrel was at an end. But after Agadir the nation realised that in some mysterious way this entente had brought new dangers to peace, and had made both our relations, and those of France, with Germany more difficult. Many Liberals had been uneasy for some time, suspecting that the entente was being turned into something sinister.

Grey's policy displeased such Liberals on three grounds. The first ground was that this policy was tying us dangerously to French ambition. It was all very well to say that we pledged ourselves to nothing more than diplomatic

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support on the limited question of Morocco. France was extending her claims and her powers in Morocco and that extension affected directly the interests of other Powers, including Germany. A free hand meant in this case a free hand with rights that were not merely British. Moreover, Grey, in pursuit of his policy, was turning a blind and indulgent eye to the risks to peace to which France exposed the world by her advances. If Germany disturbed the peace by the insolence of her methods of protest, France's forward policy was condemned in France not only by Socialists like Jaurès but by Conservatives like the *Journal des Débats*. We seemed to be in the position of supporting France's worse mind against her better. Yet the only security for peace was an arrangement for Morocco between France and Germany demanding on both sides moderation and self-control.

The second ground of objection was that this policy was leading to great naval expenditure, increasing the danger of war, and laying heavy burdens on a people whose domestic needs demanded a different use of its resources. Liberals attributed to this policy the several crises over the naval estimates, which threatened at different times to break up the Government.

The third was that it disregarded the rights of weak peoples like those of Morocco and Persia. This last objection was put into a single sentence by Mr Brailsford, who made a special study of the general system of concessions and compensations that marked the relations of the European Powers to the countries that could not defend themselves. 'An arrangement of this kind is a *perpetuum mobile*. We are all paying still, and for years to come may go on paying, because Lord Lansdowne gave away a piece of Africa which was not his to give.'

All these objections to Grey's policy were maintained with a vigour and ability that have rarely been equalled in the history of polemical journalism. Seldom, indeed, has a Government or Minister encountered such skilled and such severe criticism from political opponents as Grey encountered from his political friends. For his policy was under

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constant fire from five exceptionally telling critics, Mr H. Sidebotham in the *Manchester Guardian*, Mr H. W. Massingham and Mr H. N. Brailsford in the *Nation*, Mr A. G. Gardiner in the *Daily News*, and Mr F. W. Hirst in the *Economist*. The Liberal Foreign Secretary found himself depending almost entirely upon Conservative support, a support often embarrassing and misleading, for among Liberal writers his only steady advocate was Mr J. A. Spender, the able and experienced editor of the *Westminster Gazette*. If Grey had been less aloof and silent by nature, his policy in some cases would have been judged less severely, for his critics certainly underestimated his difficulties. The series of British documents, edited by Dr Gooch and Dr Temperley, have made public for the first time the obstacles that Germany offered to a policy of friendship, and the lengths Grey went in attempting to overcome them. Of Liberal journalists Mr Spender alone was fully in Grey's confidence.

Scott wrote very little in these years on foreign policy, but he had strong views, and he shared to the full both the anxiety and the hostility that Grey's policy excited. It was in one sense unfortunate that the only Minister with whom he discussed foreign policy closely was Loreburn, Lord Chancellor from 1906 to 1912. Nobody could know anything of Loreburn without admiring his courage, his independence, and his sincerity. Alike by his character and his intellect he gave distinction to any cause that he helped to lead. But though a most important member of the Cabinet, he was kept very much in the dark about its foreign affairs. This he resented bitterly and justly. In the second place, though a most honourable and generous man, he was not an easy colleague and he was not on good terms with any of the Ministers concerned. Moreover, by his firm resolve to make an end of the vicious mixing of politics and patronage in the appointment of magistrates, and his consequent refusal to put Liberals in large numbers on the bench just because his predecessor had been shameless in keeping them off, he had offended the Whips and all Liberals whose party sense was the strongest thing about



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their Liberalism. His great qualities and his small combined to put him in an uncomfortable position. He felt that he was in the cold. He continually complained, and not without reason, that he was kept in ignorance of Cabinet policy; treated by others with less consideration than was due to him, he was apt in turn to think worse of his colleagues than they deserved. Scott, therefore, was at a certain disadvantage in depending on him for a knowledge of the details of Grey's foreign policy.

Loreburn was in error on two points. In the first place he attributed too much blame to Grey and too little to Germany for the suspicion and ill-will that embarrassed the relations of the two countries. This is clear to anybody who studies the documents that have been made public in the last few years.

In the second place he was in error in his view of the relative capacity of the French and German Governments. He told Scott after the war that the war could have been averted by a resolute policy of co-operation with Germany. The history of those years proves, as Dr Pibram shows in his book *England and Europe 1871-1914*, that France surpassed Germany in subtlety, foresight, and self-control, and Loreburn's policy would have bound up our fortunes with the irresponsible humours of the Kaiser. Nothing, perhaps, shows better how much Grey was at fault in keeping his colleagues in the dark about the policy and experience of the Foreign Office, than the ignorance in which one of his ablest colleagues was left.

Scott's own position was clear and definite from the first. He was opposed not merely to the details of Grey's policy, but to his whole plan. He stood where Salisbury stood in 1901. He believed that isolation was a safer course for us than any Continental connection. He had opposed Lansdowne's Japanese Alliance in 1905 with great vehemence. He held just as strongly that any entente with France that went the length of tying our hands was dangerous: that if we were in the Continental system at all, however anxious we might be to think ourselves free, we were accepting obligations and inviting risks that would

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demand a great army on the Continental plan. From this view he was not shaken by Mr Lloyd George or by Grey, with both of whom he discussed our position at the time of Agadir. The story of that discussion is told in his diary.

On the 20th July 1911, he had breakfast with Loreburn.

*Private Papers: July 20/11*

He spoke also gravely and warningly of the *immediate danger of a quarrel with Germany* on the Moroccan question. 'Take care we don't get into a war with Germany. Always remember that this is a Liberal League Government. The Government of France is a tinpot Government: Germany has but to stamp her foot and they will give way. They are capable of leaving us in the lurch. . . . It would suit them admirably that we should be involved in a war with Germany.' 'Do you know Asquith well?' 'He is very friendly and ready to see me.' 'Then I advise you to go and see him at once, but don't tell him I have said anything to you.' 'Is it urgent or would next week do?' 'Better this week than next week. Better to-day than to-morrow.'

Scott tried the same day to get an interview with Asquith, but he learned from Vaughan Nash that he was desperately occupied with the Parliament Bill, and could not see him for a day or two. Scott then sent a letter to Asquith.

*July 20, 1911*

DEAR MR ASQUITH,

I hope you will forgive me if, as officially responsible for the Liberal organisation in Manchester, I write just a few lines about the possibility of our coming to a quarrel with Germany on the Moroccan (Agadir) question, or matters arising out of it. That we should go to war in order to prevent Germany from acquiring a naval station on the West African coast has, I believe, not occurred to most Liberals as even a possibility, but what I have no doubt of is that if such a thing were to happen it would pulverise the party. There is no feeling among Liberals here against Germany—it is generally recognised that her

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policy of the open-door in Morocco has even been of material service to us—and that there would be any deadly danger to our interests in her acquiring a West African port would be wholly disbelieved. I can imagine no more foolish war and none more fatal alike to party and to national interests than one with Germany on this matter. You will excuse me, I hope, if I am conjuring up a danger which has no real existence, but it is the first steps often which count and I could not forgive myself if, even at the risk of troubling you to no purpose, I did not report to you what I believe to be the feeling of the overwhelming majority of the party at least in this district. I need hardly say that I hope you will not be at the trouble of replying to this letter.

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
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Having written his letter, Scott returned to Manchester, but there, that evening, he received two urgent messages. One was from Mr Lloyd George, who asked him as a personal favour not to write anything on the German business till he had seen him; the other from the Chief Whip:

Your letter has only just been received by the Prime Minister, though it appears to have been sent yesterday. The Prime Minister is most anxious that you should not misapprehend the situation, and hopes very much that you will be able to come up to town, when he would see you after breakfast with the Chancellor.

Scott then had a series of interviews, with Mr Lloyd George, with Asquith, and with Grey.

*Private Papers: Saturday, July 22/11*

Breakfast with Ll. G. Chief Whip and his brother and Miss Ll. G. also there; afterwards alone with Ll. G.; then Churchill joined and Murray came back. Then saw P.M. and lastly some talk with the other three and with Ll. G. alone before leaving.

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They were all civil and apologetic for bringing me up. Churchill said to Ll. G. that I ought to be kept constantly informed as to all important matters. Ll. G. said that was just what he tried to do and rather reproached me for not coming to him sooner now. Ll. G. rather laid it on about *M.G.*—it would smash party if we and Government were at odds. *M.G.* he had found much more considered in Germany than any other Liberal paper and if we let Government down in international controversy it would be inferred that they had no sufficient backing in this country, and give a dangerously false impression of their actual determination, which, up to a certain point, was fixed and practically unanimous, Loreburn being the only exception.

Their present demand was simply to be made parties to any re-settlement of the Moroccan question. They were bound by treaty with France to give her diplomatic support and under Algeciras convention had treaty rights which they were entitled to assert. Seventeen days ago Grey had sent despatch to Berlin making this request in the most unprovocative manner; the despatch had not even been acknowledged. Metternich's attention had just been called to this neglect; he replied that he had heard nothing from his Government on the subject. A second despatch was therefore sent yesterday repeating the request. There had been a question of doing more than this and sending warships to Agadir. I gathered that Grey had wished to do this and Ll. G. opposed, and that Grey had withdrawn the suggestion. Ll. G. spoke warmly of Grey, and said he was very good in showing him (Ll. G.) everything, and that he (Ll. G.) had got him only yesterday to modify his despatch (to Berlin). A despatch had also been sent to our ambassador at Paris instructing him to inform the French Government that we were not prepared to give them support in regard to the French Congo.

The feeling of the Government was that, looking to the enormous possessions of France and Great Britain in Africa and to the relatively very small possessions of Germany, Germany might reasonably claim a larger share, and that it would be policy so far as possible to satisfy her.

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Her demands on the French Congo, and the French revisionary right to the Belgian Congo were extravagant; but they were not opposed to any British interest, though in any general settlement we might look for some concession from her in turn—say Demaraland which the Boers wanted and would some day invade, or as to the Bagdad Railway or the Persian Gulf. But as to Morocco, we had a strong interest; not in preventing the acquisition by Germany of territory, even of considerable territory, on the South Moroccan coast and hinterland—a very rich district—on the contrary it would give her useful occupation, and take up some of the money that might otherwise go into Dreadnoughts; but in preventing the formation of a great naval base right across our trade routes.

I represented that as Germany could not afford to divide her battleships the worst she could do would be to detach a cruiser squadron, and that the worst consequence to us would be that we must detach twice as many cruisers to watch them. He thought this would be a serious weakening of our forces, but had no real reply. On the whole he was strongly in favour of preventing in the most conciliatory manner possible, but of insisting unflinchingly, that no change in the *status quo* in Morocco should take place without our being made parties to it. . . . But neither he nor Grey nor himself (Lt. G.) would consent to hold office unless they were permitted to assert the claim of Great Britain to have her treaty rights and her real interests considered, and to be treated with ordinary diplomatic civility as a Great Power. The whole correspondence would have hereafter to be published, and it would be fatal even to our party interests if it should be found that we had not maintained the clear rights and the dignity of the country. I, of course, agreed with him about this. I did not think it conceivable that Germany should resist such a demand temperately pressed, but the question was what interests had we, for which in the last resort we were prepared to go to war, and was the prevention of a German naval station at Agadir one of them? I got no clear answer to this.

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Repeatedly in the course of the conversation Ll. G. spoke of France's weakness and terror in face of Germany. She had her eyes ever fixed on 'those terrible legions across the frontier.' 'They could be in Paris in a month and she knew it.' Then Germany would ask not 200 millions but 1000 millions as indemnity, and would see to it that France as a Great Power ceased to exist. There was real danger that Prussia (it was Prussia really, not Germany, which was in question) should seek a European predominance not far removed from the Napoleonic. I said I had hoped that recently there had been a movement the other way and that the German Emperor's visit to this country had been used to bring about better relations. He flared up and said the German Emperor when our guest had behaved 'like a cad,' and actually used his opportunity of meeting the representatives of other nations also our guests in order to influence their minds against us, as 'this comes of trusting Great Britain.' 'X' he described as a coarse bully, and he said his opinion of the Emperor had considerably changed since he had found he was the sort of man thoroughly to enjoy this person's company, drinking quantities of beer with him and roaring over the smutty stories which he formed the staple of his conversation. He did not tell me his authority for all this. The impression I got was that he is not immune from the microbe of Germanophobia. He was very much down on Loreburn, whom he described as 'petulant, unreasonable,' and always 'rubbing Grey the wrong way'; practically alone in the Cabinet. When I spoke of the Cabinet as a 'Liberal League Cabinet' he repudiated the description—there had been a great change in the last year or two. I said no doubt the Radicalism of the party was influencing the Government; he suggested that it was rather the Budget that had done it.

My interview with Asquith was comparatively brief—perhaps twenty minutes. As to the facts, he did not add much to what Ll. G. had told me and which he assumed that I knew. I pressed him as to the essential point of the extent of our interest at Agadir. I repeated what I had said to Ll. G. and he did [not]<sup>1</sup> materially disagree

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with me. 'If you ask me,' he said, 'whether, to put it brutally, it is worth our while to go to war about Agadir [i.e. its being made into a fortified port] I should say it is not.' Apart from this question we should have no objection to Germany's acquiring territory in South Morocco provided always that she maintains the 'open door' to trade.

At present Agadir is not even one of the Moroccan 'open' ports; it is a closed port and if Germany acquired it without conditions she might maintain it as a port closed to all trade except her own trade. There would be no objection on our part to the acquisition by Germany of territory and a port—Libreville—on the French Congo. That lies far to the east of the trade-routes, and she might do what she liked there. Another reason why we could not object is that she already possesses by the terms of a secret treaty (one of the many to which the late Government were parties) certain contingent rights to a port on the West African coast. . . . But we should strongly resist the acquisition by Germany of a port on the south Mediterranean coast.

Speaking generally, he strongly concurred in Lloyd George's view that Germany's desire for expansion in Africa should be satisfied. He had a large map, coloured according to protectorates, hanging [on]<sup>1</sup> the wall, and invited me to consider the enormous disparity between the English and French and the German possessions.

*Private Papers: July 25/11*

Breakfast 9-10.30—

Sir E. G. referred at once to my conversation of Saturday with Lloyd George. I said there was one point which he had left obscure; was, or was not the question of the fortification of Agadir as a naval base a vital interest for us. 'The fortification. Oh! yes. That is certainly a vital interest.' 'But,' I replied, 'what does it amount to? It is very undesirable, no doubt, and would place us at a certain disadvantage in the event of war with Germany, but would it be worth while

<sup>1</sup> Omitted in MS.

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to go to war in order to prevent a relatively slight disadvantage in case we were at war?' He did not pretend that it would, but merely contended that the disadvantage might be greater than I had suggested—two containing ships to every one to be contained. That was the old estimate, but the difficulties of blockade had been increased by the great increase in the range of projectiles and the invention of torpedo boats and submarines. The blockading ships had to keep such a long way off.

As to the present position of affairs—I had spoken of our 'despatch' to Germany of nearly three weeks ago; there had been no despatch but merely a conversation between himself and the German ambassador—a very formal one, no doubt, and Metternich had taken down in writing the material words of his statement for communication to his Government. At last, yesterday, Metternich had telephoned asking to see him, and there had been a further conversation. He attributed even this tardy response to Lloyd George's speech on Saturday, which had had a considerable—what diplomatists called—'retentissement'. As to the effect of this communication now it had come, I gathered that no admission had been made of the claim we had made to be consulted in case the direct negotiation with France should fail. (There had been no demand for immediate consultation). All the satisfaction he had got was a statement that Germany had not landed troops at Agadir, but when Grey asked if he would give permission to make this fact public he declined to do so. Grey also told me that the negotiation with France was being conducted under pledge of secrecy—i.e. that France was not at liberty to inform us of its progress.

A new point to me, and a rather grave one, was the general contention which I understood from Grey to be put forward by Germany, that by our agreement giving France a free hand politically, in Morocco, we had estopped ourselves from interfering in any direct political negotiations into which she might enter with another power, just as France would be estopped from interfering under similar circumstances in Egypt. It was this, I gathered, which made him so anxious



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that it should be at once and clearly understood in Germany that we should regard the presence of a great naval power like Germany on the Atlantic coast of Morocco as constituting a new situation, and giving us a right, which we meant to assert, to be considered and consulted. He did not wish Germany, through ignorance of our real intentions, to commit herself so far that she could not withdraw, as happened with Russia before the Crimean War. As to the capabilities of Agadir as a naval base, his information from the Admiralty was that it is better than Mogador but that to make it really formidable would be very expensive.

On two material points I found him rather strangely uninformed. When I said that the Act of Algeciras cancelled all previous treaties in so far as they might be inconsistent with it, and that this must include the Anglo-French agreement, he seemed doubtful, and said he had not studied the article. Still more strangely he knew nothing whatever of the definite rejection by the Monis Ministry last April of the important commercial convention with Germany, negotiated by the Briand Ministry, and giving practical effect to the general agreement come to by France and Germany in 1909. All he knew was that previously there had been some minor arrangements as to mining enterprises in Morocco in which England had not got her fair share, but he had 'winked at' the inequality so as not to embarrass France. I remarked that this false step of the Monis Ministry had probably led up directly to, and partly justified, the Agadir incident. He said he would inform himself as to the matter but that Germany had not, so far as he knew, made a grievance of it.

All through he spoke of the importance of getting Germany to moderate her demands so as not to compel France to reject them, but he never alleged a corresponding need that France should be prepared to make really big concessions in order to pay off Germany as she had already paid off us. He did not deny when I put it to him that Germany had just as good (or bad?) a right to compensation for giving France a free hand politically in Morocco, as we had claimed and received.

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I spoke incidentally of the importance to us of getting Germany to abandon any political interests in Morocco, or at least the Northern part of it, so as to exclude her from interference on the Mediterranean sea-board; and he admitted at once that for Germany to acquire a naval base on the Mediterranean would be infinitely more serious than for her to acquire one on the Atlantic, as it would involve a great and permanent increase of our naval force in the Mediterranean (which we had been able by our agreement with France to reduce), in order to prevent our communications with Egypt from being cut. That would mean probably a revolt of the Egyptian army, and very likely a Turkish advance, at German instigation, by way of the Sinai peninsula. He commended Bryce's foresight in stating twenty years ago that our real interests were not in Egypt but in Morocco.

The Master of Elibank (who had left a message for me to come and see him afterwards), had nothing to add, but merely wanted to know my impressions of what Grey had said. Incidentally, he said he thought they would have to make a small batch of peers at once. He would take care that I was kept informed about everything—domestic and foreign.

NOTE.—At one point in the conversation I tried to get at the more general and underlying ground of our policy. He at once admitted that this was to give to France such support as would prevent her from falling under the virtual control of Germany and estrangement from us. This would mean the break-up of the Triple Entente, as if France retired, Russia would at once do the same, and we should again be faced with the old troubles about the frontiers of India. It would mean also the complete ascendancy of Germany in Europe, and some fine day we might have the First Lord of the Admiralty coming to us and saying that instead of building against two powers we had to build against six. (I remarked that I could well imagine his saying so.) But the history of the Napoleonic wars showed that any power which achieved European dominance in the last resort came to a check against England, which, so long as she retained her

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sea-power, could not be coerced, and that would be the inevitable sequel to a German as to a French supremacy.

Scott complied with Mr Lloyd George's request that he should not write on Agadir till they had met, and so the *Manchester Guardian* appeared without any editorial comment on the morning following Mr Lloyd George's speech. On Monday July 27, a leader was published (not written by Scott himself), of which part may be quoted here:

The passage which Mr Lloyd George read from his MS. at the end of his speech last Friday has been closely scanned, and has nearly everywhere received the same interpretation. It is believed to refer to Germany, and to express our uneasiness over her action at Agadir and the negotiations between M. Cambon and the German Chancellor. In these negotiations, so far as is known, neither England nor any other Power but France and Germany is taking part, and there would seem therefore to be some looseness in Mr Lloyd George's startling sentence about our determination not to be made 'of no account in the Cabinet of nations'. Negotiations or conversations between France and Germany are not accurately described as the meeting of a Cabinet of nations.

But, of course, we need no excuse for defending our 'vital interests' (another phrase used by Mr Lloyd George in the same passage) wherever and however they are attacked; as the country now and always expects the Government to do without fear or hesitation. But what are 'vital interests' in this matter? Mr Lloyd George did not explain, and we certainly cannot agree with the account of them given by the English Opposition papers. The *Observer*, for example, writes 'We must stand with France at any cost against unreasonable demands, no matter of what nature'; and evidently quite sincerely regards that as Mr Lloyd George's meaning too. We should put the matter much lower, and so, we are inclined to think would our French friends. They know that with the best intentions in the world we cannot save France from the German legions, and where Germany is concerned she would much rather have promises of support

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from the armies of Russia than from the English Navy. We must take care, therefore, not to be more French than the French, and not to encourage her for motives of our self-interest in a policy which would have far more serious results for her than for us. We would suggest another formula for our policy, namely, that this country should fulfil its treaty obligations and protect its own interests, and though this formula may sound less heroic, it is, we believe, fairer to France and to ourselves.

In November, Scott had a further talk with Grey.

*Private Papers: Nov. 3/11*

Saw Sir E. G. by appointment in his room at the House. Said I wished to see him in regard to our relations with Germany. I was anxious not to drift into opposition to the Government and should be glad if he could help me. He said our position arose out of the history of the question—during the whole period of the Salisbury Government from 1886 onward and including the brief Liberal Government of 1890-93 the policy had been one of a friendly understanding with the Triple Alliance, so much so that it had been denounced by other powers as the 'Quadruple Alliance.' This did not prevent trouble on either side. Germany was exacting and troublesome, and we were repeatedly on the brink of war with France or Russia. The situation was found to be intolerable, and with the conclusion of the agreement with France on outstanding questions we entered on a friendly understanding with her and Russia. This did not imply hostility to Germany. Since then there had been no difficulties with France, and the danger of annexation by Russia of the northern provinces of Persia (which would almost inevitably under the existing internal conditions of Persia have taken place, and which would have been strongly resented by us though we should probably not have gone to war to prevent it) had been averted.

As to the Morocco difficulty we were bound to give France our diplomatic support in her resistance to dismemberment of Morocco, and diplomatic support implied, if it was to be

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influence, as the price of her exclusion from Tibet and Afghanistan. In this case, too, the entente stiffened into something more. We were soon helping Russia to destroy Persian independence because we did not dare to estrange her. It is a squalid chapter of history; if English Liberals had watched it with indifference there would have been little virtue left in English Liberalism. For it was watched with anything but indifference by our Minister at Teheran, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, whose letters discover the pain and shame with which he carried out a policy he found repulsive.

'The patriots were confronted with the fact that at the very moment when they came to the fore and had a chance of saving the country, their natural ally, England, went over to the enemy and put her hand in that of the oppressors. That is the game I am playing now.'<sup>1</sup>

On Persia, Scott got no help or sympathy from Loreburn, who, like Morley and unlike Spring Rice, considered the Persian nationalists undeserving of support, the reform movement a mere flicker, and the Russian entente as valuable for our Indian interests. On this question the friend whom Scott consulted and with whom he co-operated was John Dillon, whose sympathies with oppressed peoples in all parts of the world led C. E. Montague to describe him as one of the four best Liberals he had ever known, the other three being Campbell-Bannerman, Scott, and Montague's own father.<sup>2</sup>

A letter that Scott wrote to Grey shows how strongly he felt upon this question.

October 26, 1910

DEAR SIR EDWARD GREY,

I feel extremely reluctant to trouble you with a personal difficulty, but I think perhaps it is franker to do so and I am sure you will forgive me. As President of the Manchester Liberal Federation I should, in the natural course, take the chair at the Free Trade Hall meeting for you on December 6th, but I don't know whether I ought to do so, dissenting as I do in the strongest manner from the policy of the

<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring Rice*, Vol. II, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *C. E. Montague: A Memoir*, by Oliver Elton, p. 89.

## FOREIGN POLICY—II

threatened intervention in Persia which appears to me to be a complete abnegation of Liberal principles. If you should have occasion to refer to the matter in your speech it would hardly be seemly for me to be supporting you overnight and attacking you through the paper next morning. Possibly in any case you might prefer that I should not be in the chair, and in that case I could just excuse myself and only a few people need be any the wiser. I hate to trouble you about so small a matter, and I think you should know that there is no one in public life for whom I have a deeper regard than for yourself.

Yours very truly,  
C. P. SCOTT

*October 27, 1910*

DEAR MR SCOTT,

I should be very sorry if you felt yourself unable to take the Chair, for I do not think that there is any substantial difference between us. The Note which was addressed to the Persian Government has been misrepresented, and its purport exaggerated.

For a long time I have been much pressed by people who trade in Persia, because their trade is blocked by the insecurity of the southern roads. I therefore instructed our Minister in Teheran some time ago to urge the Persian Government to make those roads secure, and if they could not do so themselves, to agree to the organisation of a Persian road force, to which we would lend eight or ten Anglo-Indian officers.

I have not yet received the actual text of our Note or of the Persian reply, but I gather that the Persian Government say that they have no money, and ask for a ten per cent increase of the Customs dues. I shall answer that I will agree to the ten per cent increase if they will adopt some scheme which will make it certain that the increase of dues will be used to make the roads secure. I shall point out to them that the scheme which I have proposed is a practical one, and shall tell them that if they will accept it I will agree to the increase in the Customs dues.

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What the result of these negotiations will be, I cannot say. It is most difficult to get any business at all done with the Persian Government. If they are quite intractable, the question of what our policy must be will have to be considered by the Government, and pending that I cannot make any statement about it. But I cannot think that there is anything in what we have already said, or done, or decided which need cause you difficulty; nor do I anticipate that there will have been any startling development before the date of the Manchester meeting.

Please regard this about my reply to the Persian Government as confidential, because it has not yet been sent to them and is only being drawn up now, and I ought not to say anything publicly about it till it is in their hands.

Yours very truly,  
E. GREY

*November 3, 1910*

DEAR SIR EDWARD GREY,

I am extremely obliged to you for your letter and am relieved to learn that the purport of the Note addressed to the Persian Government has been misrepresented. It seems important that the true state of the facts should be made known. At present a good many Liberals are feeling angry and disheartened, and the feeling will grow if it is not checked.

Would you be willing to receive a deputation—I think a sufficiently important one could be quickly arranged—to which you could make a statement? Or, if you preferred it, a memorial could be drawn up to which you might reply.

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

*November 8, 1910*

DEAR MR SCOTT,

This is a very busy week, and when Parliament meets there are sure to be questions in the House of Commons about Persia which will give ample opportunity for making any statement which may be required.

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I am rather hopeless about the Liberals who you say feel 'angry and disheartened'. A *communiqué* was published, after the appearance of the exaggerated reports as to our intentions, which ought to have satisfied them. Unfortunately, they accept readily without question any statement, from whatever source, which is unfavourable to the action of the Government, and having accepted it they will not listen to anything which the Government have to say. There are a number of our people who are more anxious to excite and feed their own emotions, than to know the truth or listen to it.

I shall be very glad to see you whenever you are in London after this week.

Yours sincerely,  
E. GREY

A man less self-contained than Grey would have suffered greater distress from the criticism passed on his Persian policy both by Liberals at home and by his Minister at Teheran. On one occasion he was driven to warn the Russian Ambassador that things were being done in Persia that he could no longer defend. But the Liberal criticism of the time, if it did not deflect him either from his concessions to Russia in Persia or from his resolute attachment to the Triple Entente, gave him active help in another part of his policy. For if the cardinal principle of his policy was adherence to the Triple Entente, this was not the whole of his policy. He wished also to play an active and constructive part in bringing Germany and England to better relations. His policy was indeed well described in a despatch in May 1912, when the French Ambassador in Berlin had expressed some concern about our diplomatic approaches to Germany.

Jules Cambon ought to bear in mind that the French have more than once negotiated with the Germans. They came to a friendly agreement with them in 1909 about Morocco. Russia has done the same on occasion. We cannot keep Germany at arm's length and hold no converse with her on subjects of mutual interest. So long as France is kept informed of anything of importance that takes place, and we



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do nothing with Germany that is really of detriment to France, and do not change our general policy, the French must not complain. What I desire is that France, Russia, and ourselves should all be on the best terms with Germany, without losing touch with each other, or impairing the confidence which exists between us.<sup>1</sup>

The desires described in this last sentence were not always pursued with uniform vigour. There were times when Grey seemed almost entirely absorbed in the second. There were others when he gave his mind seriously to the first.

Some of Grey's ablest advisers held that the right course was to escape from an ambiguous position by making an open alliance with France and Russia. Only thus, thought Nicolson, could an effective resistance be offered to German ambitions.<sup>2</sup> The nation ought to know where it stood, and be prepared to meet its liabilities and dangers. As early as 1909, Nicolson, then Ambassador in Russia, had urged that the Entente should be changed into something more definite.

Grey's policy, as we have seen, differed in an important respect. He believed that it was possible to keep our place in the Triple Entente and yet bring about an improvement in our relations with Germany. In this way England would be a peacemaker in Europe. Nicolson's policy seemed a policy of despair. What he and those who thought like him said in effect was 'Let us accept the fact that Europe is divided into two camps and take our place openly and definitely in one of them. The consequences of war under these conditions would be so grave as to make Germany reluctant to risk them.'

Grey, then, received little encouragement and support in this part of his policy from the advisers and experts who surrounded him. That encouragement and support came from his critics. The shock of Agadir gave these critics another opportunity, and two significant speeches by Lansdowne and Bonar Law, expressing sympathy with Germany, helped their cause. Grey set himself seriously to the task of

<sup>1</sup> *British Documents*, Vol. VI. p. 753.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolson's point of view is given in his son's brilliant study, *Life of Lord Carnock*, by Harold Nicolson.

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winning Germany's friendship. In this effort he went to remarkable lengths. He made an agreement about Bagdad, which recognised the whole of Mesopotamia north of Basra as within the German sphere of influence. He took up the question of the ultimate division of the Portuguese colonies, on the hypothesis that Portugal might want to part with them, which had been made the subject of an agreement between England and Germany under Salisbury's Government in 1898, and came to an agreement which was much more favourable to Germany than the earlier agreement that Salisbury's Government had made with them. The negotiations were most amicable in temper, and they only ended without a treaty because Grey would not sign a treaty unless it was made public, and Germany would not agree to this till just before the war. In the Balkan Conference in the Autumn of 1913, Grey co-operated actively with Germany, receiving public compliments both from the Kaiser and from the German Chancellor. Mr Lloyd George said to Scott that it was Grey who kept the peace in that case by telling Russia firmly that England would not support her if she went to war.

Grey made also a serious effort to come to an agreement to put an end to the naval rivalry of the two countries.<sup>1</sup> The British Government wanted an agreement on shipbuilding, and an arrangement for mutual inspection of docks. It wanted, as between the two countries, the kind of disarmament scheme that is now under consideration by the League of Nations for the world at large. Germany would not agree to any such plan unless it was accompanied by a political arrangement which guaranteed her against war with England. This meant, in the existing state of Europe, the abandonment of the Entente, for, as the French pointed out, if France and Germany quarrelled over some non-British issue, the kind of formula suggested by Germany would tie the hands of England, whatever England might think of the merits of that issue. Asquith commented at the time on Germany's proposals: 'Nothing, I believe, will meet her

<sup>1</sup> Negotiations for this purpose were carried on intermittently for several years. *British Documents*, Vol. VI.

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purpose, which falls short of a promise, on our part, of neutrality—a promise we cannot give—and she makes no firm or solid offer even in exchange for that.' The German demand meant more than the abandonment of the Entente: it meant the abandonment of our freedom of action. The names of the members of the Cabinet who considered the question show that there was no lack of goodwill on the English side. They were Asquith, Grey, Morley, Lloyd George, Crewe, and Runciman. Moreover, in 1912, Haldane was sent to Berlin, nominally to talk about university education, but really to discuss and explore the new relationship with Germany. All these efforts broke down because Germany demanded, as the condition of a naval agreement, a political agreement that would tie the hands of England. For Germany was also in the circle of fear, and as we look back on the suspicions of those years of suspense we can see that fear which demoralised the diplomacy of all the great Powers, demoralised her diplomacy even more than that of her neighbours.

To understand the difficulties of Grey's position we have to remember how curious and perplexing a situation had arisen. We had drawn close to France and Russia, and were drawing closer. We clung to this connection from fear, fear of Germany, who, not content with holding a decided predominance on land was now challenging our empire at sea. Bismarck, afraid of a wounded Power, had tried to keep France isolated. His successors, inheriting his insolence without his cold skill, had gradually alienated most of Europe. They were now trying to regain his influence in a world that seemed to be slipping from them, by threats in some cases, by flattery in others. They had a fixed idea that we were encircling them, as Bismarck had tried to encircle France. The mind of the Foreign Office, on the other hand, was haunted by the fear of Germany as a Power grasping at the hegemony of Europe, and certain, when she had gained it, to use it to our mischief.<sup>1</sup> This conviction was strengthened, of course, by Germany's determined bid for naval power. Meanwhile the nation as a whole knew next to nothing of the alarms that troubled the Foreign Office. Politics at

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home provided excitement enough, with the violence of the Suffragettes, the threatened rebellion in Ulster, the furious party conflicts over the House of Lords, the bitter recriminations over the Marconi scandals. The ordinary man never dreamed that there was lurking round the corner a danger beside which all these troubles were storms in a teacup. For though the facts were known to a few Ministers before 1911, and to the whole Cabinet after 1911, they were never made known to the nation till the eve of the war.

There were two difficulties about making them known. The first and the smaller was that disclosures would destroy the peace of the Liberal party. If Grey had got up in the House of Commons and stated that Germany's policy was so unfriendly and her designs so dangerous that we had attached ourselves to France and Russia, and had discussed military measures with France, and that this was the governing fact in our foreign policy, the Asquith Government could not have survived the storm that would have followed. So violent a change in our traditional policy, so candid a recognition of war as a possible event, would have shaken parties and made a change of Government inevitable. Some will say that this was not a calamity of such a character that Grey should have shrunk from it. But Grey, after all, may be supposed to have believed that the purposes for which his Government existed were purposes of moment and value to the nation, and that its destruction could not be regarded as a light or casual episode. Moreover, he could not be sure that the trouble would end with the fall of his Government. Was it certain that a Conservative Prime Minister would be able to carry his party with him in so unexpected a development?

There was, however, a second and more serious danger. Might not this disclosure destroy the peace of Europe? Europe was a great surface of exposed and sensitive nerves. A Minister or a diplomatist could hardly drop a spoon without creating a scene. What would be the consequence of presenting England to this excited public as an effective and

<sup>1</sup> The classical exposition of this fear is the famous memorandum by Sir Eyre Crowe, January 1907. *British Documents*, Vol. III, p. 397.

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practising member of the Triple Entente? Might it not decide Germany to strike before England had made herself stronger, for each Power was straining every nerve to be ahead of its neighbour in preparation? Might it not, on the other hand, encourage France and Russia to pursue methods and policies from which prudence would have restrained them so long as English support was conditional?

The danger of frankness was thus plain and immediate. The danger of secrecy was more subtle and contingent in its character. The Foreign Minister was withholding from Parliament facts that were known to foreign Governments. Rumours led to questions in Parliament, and Grey and Asquith were compelled again and again to give answers that meant one thing to the Minister and another to the House of Commons. Neither Grey nor Asquith appreciated the effect of this studied ambiguity on their own minds. It sapped their independence. It is easy to see in their slowness and reluctance to take decisions in July 1914 the embarrassment of men who had been living in a false atmosphere. In spirit they were bound by what they had said to France; in letter by what they had said to the House of Commons.

The difficulty of estimating the wisdom of the policy pursued by England between 1904 and 1914 is that we know the event, whereas we can only guess the event of any other. Grey's policy carried us through the Balkan crisis of 1913. War came in the end by a series of accidents which went to show not that his policy was necessarily wrong, but that he had not succeeded in creating the atmosphere in which such accidents did not lead to catastrophe. This is not surprising. As we look back on these years with the knowledge that we now have of the minds and the circumstances of the various actors, the agents or the victims of the calamities of Europe, it seems clear that Grey's policy demanded qualities that he lacked. His great qualities are not likely to be forgotten, for they are qualities that gain in estimation as they become rarer. A dignity that is cold to flattery and threat, an upright and unbending character and carriage: these are virtues that men admire more as the pressure of mass excitement in the

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world becomes stronger. But if England has never had a Minister who was more honest or more disinterested, she has never had a Minister whose mind was less resourceful or enterprising.

The reason is on the surface. Grey's special power as a speaker gives the clue to his temperament. Most men who speak with great effect take from their audience and do not only give to it. Grey pursued the train of his argument with a self-possession that was unaffected by atmosphere. By this cold detachment he gained a mastery over the House of Commons not surpassed by an orator like Mr Lloyd George, who can play what tune he likes on the temper of his audience, as he darts in and out of its swift moods and sudden passions. But Grey's detachment was a symptom of weakness as well as of strength. It was the detachment of a man who never stepped into the minds of others. When he was not living in his own mind he was living in the mind of Nature. For the world that interested him was the world made by God and not the world made by man. Unhappily, there was a good deal more of man than of God in the world where his difficult duties lay. For the management of that world the power of entering into other minds, the power he lacked, was needed almost more than any other.

In his candid and revealing book Grey provides a striking illustration of this defect. In the spring of 1914 the French asked him to allow the Russian Admiralty to discuss plans with the British. He tells us that he assented, thinking the proposal unimportant. Yet he should have known enough of Russia to know that though circumstances could be imagined under which these conversations would be desirable, no circumstances could be imagined under which they would be unimportant. Nobody could doubt that this disturbing secret would be sold to Germany, with whom at that time Grey was attempting patiently and successfully to improve our relations. The arrangement, therefore, of which he took this view was bound to affect both Germany and Russia, two uncertain and dangerous quantities in the world of diplomacy. Grey, that is, attached no importance to a step that was certain to make Russia more ready to count

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on our support, and Germany less ready to trust our assurances. No Minister could hope to achieve the great task that Grey had set himself in the sensitive and suspicious Europe of those days to whom the mind of Europe was so strange and distant.

Scott admired the independence of Grey's character, but he doubted the independence of his judgment. He diverged from the main assumptions on which Grey and the Foreign Office were agreed. Had not the Foreign Office been misled by the storm of our unpopularity in the Boer War, a war he thought unwise and unjust? Never, if our policy was wise and just, should we have to face such a storm again. He wanted to escape from the whole system of obligations and understandings, and to return as far and as fast as we could to the path of isolation. Whether that policy could have succeeded or not, whether having been drawn so far into the Continental system we could have made our way back without danger to ourselves and to Europe, these are questions that cause endless debate. It would be interesting to know whether Scott would have adhered to his view if he had studied all the documents now available to the historian. But he never returned to the question. For he made it his practice never to debate the past. In this case the catastrophe brought with it tasks so absorbing and so novel that it is not surprising that his practical mind was soon completely immersed in them.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE WAR—I

IN the winter of 1913-1914 Scott had trouble with his eyes. He was suffering from detachment of the retina, and the oculists attributed this to active disease. He was advised to have one of his eyes taken out. Fortunately Scott decided to see a German oculist before taking this advice, and he went to Dr Stock at Jena, who judged, as it proved rightly, that operation was unnecessary and that there was no disease. From that time to the end of his life, nearly nineteen years later, Scott had no trouble with his good eye. He was able, indeed, to read an evening paper in a taxicab on his way to the office.

Scott returned from a third visit to Germany just before the outbreak of war. He had an interview with Mr Lloyd George as soon as he was back, on July 27th, and left a record of Mr Lloyd George's view at that time.

*Private Papers: July 27/14*

As to the *European situation* there could be no question of our taking part in any war in the first instance. He knew of no Minister who would be in favour of it and he did not believe *The Times* article represented the views even of the Foreign Office officials. But he admitted that a difficult question would arise if the German fleet were attacking French towns on the other side of the Channel and the French sowed the Channel with mines. He also evidently contemplated our going a certain distance with France and Russia in putting diplomatic pressure on Austria. Then if war broke out we might make it easy for Italy to keep out, by, as it were, pairing with her. This would be a service to Italy, who hated Austria much more than she did France, and no more wanted to be in the war than we did; also a service to France by relieving her of one antagonist.



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As to the prospect of war he was very gloomy. He thought Austria *wanted* war—she had wanted it before during the Balkan crisis—and not an accommodation. She wanted to ‘teach Serbia a lesson’ and suppress her ambitions. Germany did not want war, but would be bound to support Austria. He thought if there was to be war it would come quickly, so that Germany, which could mobilise in a week, could gain the initial advantage over France, which took a fortnight, and Russia, which took a month. Germany would probably seek to strike hard at France and cripple her in the first instance, then swing back and strike at Russia. By sea she might use her superiority in order (i) to land a force behind the French force, advancing to meet the German invasion across Belgium, (ii) to join the Austrian fleet in the Mediterranean and cut the French communications with Algeria, where she has a large force of very serviceable native troops.

I pointed out the danger of bluffing—of pretending to stand by the Triple Entente in order that we might claim as a price for retiring from it the corresponding retirement of Italy from the Triple Alliance, but he defended it on the ground of its serviceableness to France, remarking ‘You know I am much more pro-French than you are.’

Scott gave his own views to Illingworth, the Chief Whip, with whom he had a talk afterwards. ‘I insisted that the only course for us would be to make it plain from the first that if Russia and France went to war we should not be in it. I hoped Grey would keep them out of this war, as he had of the war they threatened last year, but if he let us into it there would be an end of the existing Liberal combination and the next advance would have to be based on Radicalism and Labour.’

Scott was greatly struck by the confusion and bewilderment that he found among the Ministers whom he saw in the critical days that followed. The records left by Members of the Cabinet, in particular those of Asquith, Grey, and Morley, show that this confusion was general. This was partly due to the state of Europe. The ice was thin everywhere, and it was a nice question whether it was thinner in

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Berlin or St Petersburg. Was it possible to threaten Germany without encouraging Russia or to attempt to restrain Russia without encouraging Germany? Peace rested on a delicate equilibrium. Grey, fortified by his success in the previous year, tried to give it a stronger basis by proposing a Conference. The proposal was wise, and Grey's action in making it gave England an honourable part in the last chapter of these ten years of ambiguous diplomacy. It is significant that most of Grey's critics, when the proposal and Germany's refusal to take advantage of it were made known, recognised that the chief blame for the final crash rested on Germany. Scott himself, though he remained critical, acknowledged when the White Paper was issued, that Germany had thwarted the effort for peace.

But there was another cause of confusion. It is clear from the records left that although the German invasion of Belgium was not unexpected, the Cabinet had never been asked to consider what action it would take in that event or what action might be taken to avert it. This is the more extraordinary because in 1906 the War Office had concerted plans for the defence of Belgium with the Belgian military authorities.<sup>1</sup> Yet Asquith's book and Morley's book both show that the Cabinet had never discussed this question until the eleventh hour.<sup>2</sup> 'Later,' says Morley (he heads his chapter 'On or about July 24-27') 'we were pressed by the Prime Minister and Grey to examine the neutrality of Belgium and our obligations under the Treaty of 1839. But it was thrown back day after day as less urgent than France.' 'We had a Cabinet at 11,' records Asquith of July 31, 'and a very interesting discussion, especially about the neutrality of Belgium, and the point upon which everything will ultimately turn—are we to go in or stand aside?' 'A very interesting discussion'. Yet as early as July 24 Asquith had written 'So we are within measurable distance of a real Armageddon.' It is difficult to think that a Cabinet,

<sup>1</sup> *British Documents*, Vol. III, chapter xx. They were authorised by Grey on January 16, 1906 (p. 179).

<sup>2</sup> *Memories and Reflexions*, by the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, and *Memorandum on Resignation*, by Viscount Morley.

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within measurable distance of Armageddon, could have continued to put off the discussion of Belgium unless there was some paralysing cause. The cause was to be found in our ambiguous relationship to France. This ambiguous relationship was damaging chiefly because it created an ambiguous mind within the Cabinet. In consequence, the question of Belgium was postponed until it was too late to take effective action. Asquith and Grey were both conscious of the grave divergencies of opinion in the Cabinet, and they allowed these divergencies to govern their plans; yet it would have been better to break up the Government than to leave this issue undecided.

For, as it proved, the invasion of Belgium determined the character, the course, and the length, of the war. It gave to the war from its first day an implacable temper, and it set up a barrier to peace which no diplomacy could overcome, for the Allies held that Germany should be punished for going into Belgium, and Germany that she should be compensated for going out. Nothing but victory or defeat could settle so direct and irreconcilable a difference.

If the Government had followed Gladstone's example in 1871, and let it be known that the invasion of Belgium would be a *casus belli*, it would have encountered opposition important in quality but not strong enough in numbers to deflect its course. Scott would have been among the dissentients, for to the last moment he was against British participation. On August 3rd he wired to Mr Lloyd George: 'Feeling of intense exasperation among leading liberals here at prospect of Government embarking on war no man who is responsible can lead us again.'

He returned to London and saw Sir John Simon and other members of the Cabinet who were known to be against Grey's policy. His record of his final interviews makes it clear that it was the attack on Belgium that brought the Liberal Government into the war with only two resignations, those of Lord Morley and Mr Burns. Morley told him later that if Germany had delayed her invasion of Belgium by forty-eight hours, the Cabinet would have

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broken up and there would have been a Coalition Government.

Once war had begun, Scott was against any discussion of pre-war policy. When asked after the declaration of war to speak at a meeting of protest organised by the Manchester and Salford Trades and Labour Council, he wrote the following letter:

*August 7, 1914*

DEAR MR MELLOR,

I am very much obliged to you for your letter and shall be glad if you will thank your Committee for the compliment they have paid me.

I don't know if you are holding your meeting on Sunday but I'm afraid I can't be there. I am strongly of opinion that the war ought not to have taken place and that we ought not to have become parties to it, but once in it the whole future of our nation is at stake and we have no choice but do the utmost we can to secure success. Of course there are principles at stake and there will be an account to settle, but the account must be held over till men have time to think and political action becomes again possible. Then indeed a good many of us may have something to say.

In this case, as generally, he found himself in agreement with Bryce and Loreburn. Bryce wrote to him on the 17th August: '... With what you say about our getting into war I agree, so far as I know the facts. We did not drift, for it looks as if the Foreign Office had meant all along that we should go in to support France, whatever Germany might do. What other explanation can be put on No. 123 of the Correspondence?

'But the Cabinet did not mean this. No doubt it was the invasion of Belgium that turned the scale with them. Whether supposing Belgium had not been touched, the Foreign Office, having committed England by the arrangement about the two fleets, would not anyhow have pushed us in, is matter for conjecture. Some day we may know more.

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'What puzzles me is the apparent rashness of Germany in not holding Austria back. There is no sufficient evidence for the tale that she had planned the whole business beforehand with a view to attack Russia. Rather would it seem that she and Austria thought Russia would not fight, and still less expected us to fight. Yet no doubt they knew of the conversations with the French Generals and Admirals ever since 1905 and 1906. Not a word about these conversations did the Cabinet know in 1906 . . .'

Two of Loreburn's letters may be given.

September 2, 1914

. . . Now that we are in for this war we must do our best to win and save all that we have to save for ourselves and for civilisation. In a little time I hope we may see daylight, and must then strive that when the day comes the peace shall be such as to be enduring. The question how it came about and who is to blame for our being at war ought, I feel, to stand over till we are at peace. Clearly Austrians and Germans forced it on at the end, really in alarm, I think, lest the Russians should by mobilising deprive them of the advantage of quicker preparation. But as far as we are concerned the action of the Government, since November 1912 especially, and our communications with Belgium have all to be considered when we have driven the wolf from the door. Meantime we have nothing to do but to drive off that wolf and stand together.

I wrote you a line about a month ago to express my agreement in what the *Manchester Guardian* said before the war broke out, since which it has been manifestly wise to say nothing about Ministers and their policy.

If the French will stand hammering, and fight it out to the end, my own view is that something will give way somewhere in the frightful military machinery of Germany, for men are not machines and life is not a mere military asset, and the material element is not in the long run the predominant element either in war or in other

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human concerns. To that faith I hold. What I am nervous about, though perhaps without reason, is the solidity of France. Let us hope and pray.

*October 14, 1914*

. . . There is nothing to be done of any public action or speech. We need every man, and no one has a right to say anything that will discourage the manhood of the country from doing everything to save the existence of our country and of all the seeds of good for the world which it contains. But one's feelings about the folly at home and the fearful guilt on the Continent are a perpetual nightmare. I feel sure that Grey and the others did earnestly desire to avoid war, but they had tied themselves up with France. I feel very sorry for them in a way and would be more sorry but for the consequences of what they have done. . . .

A letter which Scott received a little later about his treatment of the war gave him great pleasure as coming from almost his oldest friend, A. W. Ward, whose daughter had lately become engaged to Dr Barnes, afterwards Bishop of Birmingham.

*March 26th, 1915*

DEAR SCOTT,

Thank you for responding so kindly to our wish; but thank you still more for your kind letter which came home to me very closely. We think Adel has chosen wisely and well. Dr Barnes, who has been an excellent tutor at Trinity and is a mathematician of high distinction, is a minister of religion at heart, and Adel's own mind seems that way. He is broad minded and without that kind of clericalism which personally I abhor.

The war has been a test to me of his inner spirit as well as of that of other friends. To me it has been a time of grief from the first—not only because of the debt I owe to German letters and learning and of my friendships there in times past, but because of the spirit which it has inevitably bred in England. I believe we were right in going to war, and that we cannot make

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peace except on an abiding basis. But I also believe that our policy was stupid, and not the least stupid where it was secret.

When the war broke out, my thoughts all ran on peace; and I put together a long, half-historical paper on Securities for Peace, which ought to form part of every pacification. But it was judged premature both by others and (privately) by myself, and now it will be belated by the course of events, which seems to put peace further off every week. I have therefore retired into German history before the fall of Bismarck.

You have conducted the paper with extraordinary self-control and wisdom. This is not my own opinion only, but among others that of E. G. Browne,<sup>1</sup> who has himself behaved extremely well, considering his strong opinions. We hope you and yours are well. My wife and Adel join in most cordial remembrances—the former is not strong, but we hope to go on a little longer together.

Yours ever,

A. W. WARD

Early in the war Scott came to the conclusion that its effective prosecution demanded changes both in the personnel and in the methods of Government. He wanted to bring about an arrangement that would give greater scope to Mr Lloyd George's special gifts. This became his principal care, and he set such value on reconstruction that he was prepared to subordinate everything to it. He believed that Mr Lloyd George excelled all his contemporaries in initiative, courage, and the active desire for reform. This view was based on the leading part Mr Lloyd George had played in giving Liberalism a constructive programme between 1906 and the outbreak of the war. Scott used often to compare him to the early Chamberlain, and when he thought that Mr Lloyd George might leave the Liberal party he spoke of it as a disaster comparable to the loss of Chamberlain in 1886.

<sup>1</sup> Professor E. G. Browne, honourably known as 'Persian Browne', because he was not only a great Persian scholar, but also a most effective champion of Persia's independence.

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Scott's feeling for Mr Lloyd George had its beginning in their co-operation during the Boer War. Thirty years after that war, when the world-wide catastrophe has thrown into a different perspective events that filled the mind and inflamed the passions of that time, it is difficult to realise how close a bond agreement in that struggle created between public men. C. E. Montague gave the reason when he said at the time that 'the island unsubmerged by meanness seemed deuced small'. It is significant that whereas of Scott's four chief friends, Loreburn, Bryce, Dillon, and Mr Lloyd George, three disagreed with him strongly on a question so close to his heart as Women's Suffrage, he had no intimate political friend who had taken the other view of the Boer War. For him, as for those four men, the South African War raised more directly and definitely than any other event the fundamental issue between justice and violence on which Liberalism, as Scott understood it, takes its stand. After the Liberals came into office in 1906, Scott had been in close alliance with Mr Lloyd George and had advised and encouraged him when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was in arduous conflict, first with Mr McKenna, and then with Mr Churchill, over the Naval Estimates.<sup>1</sup>

But their friendship was, of course, deeper than mere political agreement. It was a friendship of personal affection. Mr Lloyd George's charm is known to all who have ever been in touch with him. Some would say of it what was said of Queen Elizabeth: 'The Queen did fish for men's souls and had so sweet a bait that no one could escape her network.'<sup>2</sup> Mr Lloyd George is not called the Welsh Wizard for nothing. Scott used sometimes to say that perhaps the Wizard had robbed him of his critical judgment, but he never meant it.

This view of Mr Lloyd George ruled Scott's treatment of all the personal controversies that became acute in the War.

<sup>1</sup> In January 1914, when the controversy was acute and the resignation either of Mr Churchill or of Mr Lloyd George seemed inevitable, Scott saw Mr Lloyd George on the 15th, the 16th, the 21st, the 22nd, the 23rd, and the 25th. In addition he wrote to him on the 25th in the train on his way home.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Miss Wilson in her *Queen Elizabeth*.



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He was aware of Mr Lloyd George's defects. During the War, when a Prime Minister could not speak to his own countrymen without speaking to the whole world, a false note or an ungenerous note in a public speech jarred on every sensitive Englishman. Scott knew well that, whatever his gifts, Mr Lloyd George lacked the dignity which made even Asquith's severest critics grateful for his Roman eloquence. Scott was aware, too, that a nation takes great risks when it puts power into the hands of a man whose sense of political principle is too faint and uncertain to be much of an anchor when his judgment, or that of others, is shaken by a sudden storm. But he believed firmly that the War was mishandled under Asquith's two Governments, and that Mr Lloyd George was the only man with the will, the industry, and the initiative, to manage a complicated and a dangerous problem.<sup>1</sup> At the time of the Revolution in Naples in 1820, the two brothers Pepe were discussing their plans. 'We must wait,' said Florestan, 'for the fulfilling of the time.' 'Men make their own time,' retorted Guglielmo.<sup>2</sup> Scott thought that Asquith resembled the first of these brothers, Mr Lloyd George the second. He believed also that Asquith's courage, though nobody could call it in question or fail to admire its dignity, was too cold and self-contained to move a nation, whereas Mr Lloyd George's buoyant courage was the kind that spreads from man to man.

In his view of the necessity of reconstruction Scott was in agreement with Mr Garvin. The two men had come together before the War over the effort to obtain an Irish settlement, and about this time they entered on a close co-operation, the beginning of an intimate friendship, for the purpose of bringing about drastic changes. The following letters belong to the early stages of this enterprise.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel House, who saw Mr Lloyd George on the day he became Minister of Munitions, wrote: 'He was full of energy and enthusiasm and I feel certain something will soon happen in his department. . . . He has something dynamic within him which his colleagues have not and which is badly needed in this great hour.' *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. I, p. 468. For Page's opinion of Mr Lloyd George's superior executive force see Hendrick: *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Vol. II, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> H. W. C. Davis: *Political Thought of Treitsche*, p. 71.

## THE WAR—I

*May 18, 1915*

MY DEAR GARVIN,

I saw Lloyd George the other day after seeing you, and had a few words with him alone, but the Vanderveldes were at lunch so I couldn't get very far and shall have to see him again. It is plain that we are nearing a Coalition, but I see no gain in that unless we are to have a new spirit and a new impulse at the centre of authority. We shan't get that unless we make a push for it, and the present drift is merely towards a reshuffling of the cards with an appearance of comprehension, but so far as I can see, no guarantee of greater effectiveness which can only come from a courageous initiative and an organising mind.

I should like to see you again some time soon—by the bye, I am ashamed to have taken up so much of your time the other day and wouldn't repeat the offence! Your papers seem to me far the best in London and the only ones in which independence takes a really useful form.

Yours very sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

*May 18, 1915*

DEAR LLOYD GEORGE,

I was sorry to have practically no opportunity of speaking to you the other day, though I was much interested to meet the Vanderveldes. It seems to me we have reached something like a turning-point, and that if this country is going to do its duty and the war is not to be indefinitely prolonged, quite a new spirit and quite a new impulse are needed from the centre of authority. At present I see no sign of these things. Well, some of us are not going, if we can help it, to sit down under this kind of ineffectiveness. It was of this I wanted—and want—to speak with you. A quarter of an hour would do it, if you could spare so much, and at any time, for, of course, I would be at your disposal. It is the country I am thinking of, and you also, I know, care for nothing else.

Yours very sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

C. P. SCOTT

May 24, 1915

DEAR LLOYD GEORGE,

Forgive me for bothering you with a wire to-day. I was deeply concerned at the report that you might keep the Exchequer and leave the great work of organising munitions to some one else. I think that would be fatal. For many reasons you are obviously and pre-eminently cut out for the new and essential work. Of course you ought to retain the Exchequer as well, and if a Protectionist takes it very grave trouble may follow. But if that is refused—and I know you won't make claims for yourself even where the public interest demands it—then at least let us have the one great gain which reconstruction promised us—your control with full powers of the one business that really matters. That is the public aspect of the matter; the personal one is small beside it, yet your friends will wish that, having made your reputation in one great post, you should go on to make it in another, for the time being, and in the eye of a nation, far greater. Any other solution would appear childish and impossible.

Yours ever,

C. P. SCOTT

It isn't Munitions alone that you will have before long to organise, I expect, but the nation for war.

In the following winter, after the first Coalition, formed in May 1915, had been in office for some months, Scott and Mr Garvin were still both uneasy.

December 8, 1915

MY DEAR SCOTT,

. . . Things are going from bad to worse, instead of otherwise, and in the seventeenth month after all the restraint and patience we, like you, have shown, we feel that something more must be done. Worse than anything yet has been the failure to see that shilly-shally and abandonment in the Balkans, involving the certain loss of Roumania, may ruin the Russian offensive and absolutely lose the war.

. . . Have you seen Lloyd George. His position is very

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difficult, but I can see he is driven almost desperate now by the blindness and nervelessness on every side of him. . . .

Yours ever,

J. L. GARVIN

Scott acted on Mr Garvin's suggestion and went to London. He left the following account of his conversations at this time.

*Private Papers: Dec. 11-15/15*

Went to London, primarily on Garvin's invitation to meet his proprietor, Major Waldorf Astor, M.P.—a charming person, quite young and full of enthusiasm and good-will. Saw Hobhouse and Garvin on Saturday evening. We all three agreed that the most pressing needs of the situation were to get rid of Kitchener and substitute Lloyd George as Secretary of State for War giving K. an honorific position. Garvin told me the whole story of the Cabinet conflict about Salonica. . . .

. . . On Sunday went by appointment to see Ll. G. at Walton Heath. Met him starting out to walk before lunch with Northcliffe who had arrived unexpectedly. . . . For half an hour before lunch and half an hour after Ll. G. sat to Augustus John for his portrait, a powerful but rather murderous effigy, which Mrs Ll. G. repudiated but Ll. G. declared correctly translated his inner being during the last week or two. After that an hours' walk with him myself over the heath. Found him highly pessimistic and unhelpful. Anticipated disaster at Gallipoli, perhaps at Salonica. Declared himself powerless, but could suggest no means of mending matters. Kitchener firmly entrenched and defending himself warily. Asquith anxious to get rid of him like all the rest, but shrinking from action.

. . . As to himself, Ll. G. said he meant to stick to his post. He declared he would not accept the Secretaryship for War even if it were offered him with Kitchener still in a position—as e.g. Generalissimo after the model of Joffre—to hamper him. He had had experience enough of that sort of conflict in his present office. He was quite conscious that when disaster came the War Committee of five would have to bear

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the blame, but he meant to stick to that galley and sink or swim with it.

After this I thought I might as well go home. I had a long talk again next day with Garvin both during the lunch at Astor's house and afterwards. He was discouraged by my report of Ll. G.'s purely negative attitude, quite uncharacteristic of him—and divined, as I had also in my own mind, that there was something at work in him which he had not told us. I think I partly came upon it in a curiously intimate conversation I had with Bonar Law next day when, mistaking the drift of something I had said, he remarked gravely on a tendency in Lloyd George to have an eye to his own safety. If George had become conscious of this feeling against him it would make it impossible for him to do anything which might seem to justify it. Garvin concluded that nothing could at present be done except to 'create an atmosphere' by cautious, but a good deal more significant, criticism of the conduct of the war.

During the autumn of 1915 the question of conscription was occupying the minds of Ministers. Scott himself did not share the uncompromising hostility of Liberals like Massingham, but he was anxious that conscription should not be introduced until and unless the need for it was proved beyond all doubt. He had interviews with Lansdowne, Balfour, and Bonar Law, in the autumn of 1915, and in January he had correspondence with Balfour which explains his position.

*January 2, 1916*

DEAR MR BALFOUR,

I am sure you will forgive me for sending you this personal line. You know that I was honestly willing to accept compulsory military service, provided that the voluntary system had first been tried out, and had failed to supply the men needed and who could still be spared from industry, and were numerically worth troubling about. Those, I think, are not unreasonable conditions, and I thought that in the conversation I had with you last September you agreed with them. I cannot feel that they have been fulfilled, and I do

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feel very strongly that compulsion is now being forced upon us without proof shown of its necessity, and I resent this the more deeply because it seems to me in the nature of a breach of faith with those who, like myself—there are plenty of them—were prepared to make great sacrifices of feeling and conviction in order to maintain the national unity and secure every condition needed for winning war. I do not know what is the figure supplied to the Cabinet of single unattested men, but it is of course, a gross figure, and it is impossible at this stage either to know what deductions must at once be made from it or how far it might not be reduced by measures falling far short of compulsion and which, granted goodwill, need occupy no great time. I can see no justification for pressing on an immediate measure of compulsion, and the motive commonly assigned, that it is possible to force it by the threat of rejecting the Parliament Act Amendment Bill in the House of Lords, seems to me not a fair or creditable one. What I foresee, if this course is pursued, is an inevitable breach in the union of the nation, and that for no substantial object whatever. I doubt if there are more than a perfectly negligible minority of eligible men who, with a little trouble and patience, cannot be enrolled. Of course, every man should be compelled to state his reasons for not attesting, and to be examined on them if he refuses to attest. That is a course which personally I suggested six months ago. That would not divide us. The course now proposed undoubtedly will.

Forgive me for troubling you but I know your scrupulous regard for what you hold to be fair and honourable.

Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

*January 4, 1916*

MY DEAR MR SCOTT,

I have no feeling about compulsion one way or the other, except that I desire, as far as possible, to maintain national unity, and to provide a national Army. But I do not think that, after the Prime Minister's pledge, any course was possible except that which he is pursuing. I venture to think

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it would be well if you were to wait for his statement to-morrow.

Yours sincerely,  
ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

Scott was in a curious position, for conscription was one of the issues on which Asquith was blamed as dilatory by Mr Lloyd George and Mr Churchill. But though he sympathised with Asquith rather than his critics on this question, he was convinced that Mr Lloyd George and Mr Churchill were the public men most likely to manage the problems of the war with success. In the early months of the year he was trying hard to persuade them to form an independent opposition. He wrote to Mr Churchill, who was then in France, the following letter.

*March 24, 1916*

MY DEAR CHURCHILL,

By a curious coincidence I was calling on Mrs Churchill when your friend arrived and she handed me your letter. I rejoice that you intend to return shortly and I cannot doubt that, so far as the political opportunity is concerned, the need for your presence is immediate. The Opposition—that is the party of energy and of concentration—is leaderless and waits for you to lead it. Any day may bring great events—the reconstruction of the Ministry or a military folly or misfortune. I am assured—you will probably have heard of this from other sources—that yet another Mediterranean expedition is actually on its way. It seems almost incredible that, at a time when concentration is the supreme need, there should be a further dispersion and a further entanglement. The effort will almost certainly fail and the failure together with the misfortune which it was intended to avert must deeply move the country. These are only a few of the reasons which mark the need of a perfectly loyal, but effective Opposition, with a constructive policy. There is the whole question of the air defence so vital to the navy and the need of a resolute and constant insistence on ‘the Navy first’. Regardlessness goes along with hesitation

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and one failure is sought to be covered up by making another. . . .

Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

Scott's leading aim at this time was his desire to get Lord Fisher back to the Admiralty. He left on record that this was his chief motive: ' . . . our supreme risk in the war being a defeat at sea, of which, with Balfour as First Lord, and a thoroughly weak Board of Admiralty lacking alike in experience of high command, in energy, and inventiveness, there had come in the last nine months to be at least a possibility.'

He had persuaded Loreburn to act in the Lords, and a small Committee had been formed of Peers who were dissatisfied with the conduct of the Admiralty in Balfour's hands. He describes his attempt to influence Asquith who, as Scott's account of their interview shows, had a strong case to put in answer.

*Private Papers: March 7/16*

In afternoon went to hear debate at House and sat just behind Fisher in the Special Gallery for which O'Connor kindly procured me a ticket. Balfour long and dull—Churchill rather nervous, and the House, quite unprepared and a good deal puzzled, gave him little support. But he stuck gallantly to his task amid frequent interruptions from some one just behind him (I think Macnamara), and from Balfour sitting just across the table on the Treasury Bench, who writhed visibly with irritation. The close calling for Fisher's return was dramatic, but here again the House was unprepared and puzzled. Only on the confession of labour shortage and on the failure to attack Zeppelins in their sheds did he carry the House completely with him.

Saw Loreburn after dinner. Six out of the ten peers invited had attended meeting in afternoon—Sydenham, Midleton, Cromer, Balfour of Burleigh, Peel, and himself. The others absent for unavoidable reasons. Represented that Asquith would certainly ask on what authority they alleged shortage of auxiliary ships. He had suggested that the reply to this



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should be that they declined to give authority for statement; all that mattered was that it was true and that he knew it to be true. Decided that deputation to P.M. should consist of Sydenham and Midleton with, if possible, St Aldwyn (who occupied a position of unique and acknowledged authority among the older peers). He had only been prevented from attending the meeting by the news just received of the death of a near relative.

*March 8*

. . . I got to Downing Street at a few minutes past 11, on the chance of just catching the P.M. before the Council, but he fixed 4 o'clock.

*Asquith.* He then saw me at once. His manner was pretty cold. He sat in the middle of the long Cabinet table and the chair placed for me was at the end of the same side about five yards off. He was silent and grim. . . . So I started out at once on what I had to say and talked continuously, as he did not seem inclined to assist for five or ten minutes—quite a little speech in fact in which, having fortunately considered what I should say, I was able to feel entirely unembarrassed.

I said I was glad he had not been able to see me sooner, as a great part of what I wanted to say had now already been said by Churchill. I shared the anxiety which he expressed. I ought perhaps to say that I knew he had come to England with no thought of anything except of taking the usual tri-monthly officers' leave—that he had not even known that the naval estimates were coming on, that when he did know he at first intended only to speak on the question of the air-war, and that it was only later, as information reached him which he regarded as grave, that he had decided to make a different kind of speech. That I was quite sure the speech was made in no spirit of hostility to the Ministry, or to himself personally, or to Mr Balfour. That in regard to the proposal to recall Lord Fisher it appeared to me that this would have a great effect in allaying anxiety in the country, that this anxiety was very real and widespread, that, of course, there could be no question of displacing the Ministry since no other Ministry was at this time possible, but that

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it was important the country should have full confidence in the Ministry, and Lord Fisher's return would do much to strengthen confidence. That Balfour was big enough and disinterested enough to ignore any question of personal dignity or feeling, and to act solely in the interests of the country. 'Quite true,' interjected the P.M. That if a naval check, or misfortune should take place and Lord Fisher should not have been recalled an insistent demand might arise for his immediate reinstatement, but if he had been he would share the responsibility. Finally, that it seemed to me wrong that at a time of national stress and danger so great a force alike of invention and of execution should remain unused.

Then at last he began to reply. Fisher had been there that morning at the War Council, and they had heard what he had to say. What did it amount to? His answer was a contemptuous ejaculation<sup>1</sup> and gesture, casting thumb back over shoulder as though to get rid of dirt. Then he broke out on them both, rising in his seat and marching to and fro. As for Churchill's speech, it was a piece of the grossest effrontery. Did I know that only three months ago when F. was appointed as head of the Inventions Department Churchill had denounced it as an outrage . . . Why, when Ch. and F. were together they did nothing but quarrel, and F.'s resignations were a perpetual worry of his life. He had resigned eight times before the last time. Then he actually deserted his post and went away, at a time, too, of some anxiety<sup>2</sup>. . . .

Then he quieted a little. 'I admit,' he said, 'that he has valuable qualities. He is a constructor, very fertile and ingenious;<sup>3</sup> he is not a strategist; he would be no use in command of a fleet.'<sup>4</sup> I suggested that, besides being an inventor, he was also an executant—that he had an extraordinary power of getting things done, and quoted Churchill's enthusiastic testimony to that effect. 'Oh! yes,' A. replied,

<sup>1</sup> Commonly expressed in writing as 'Pish' or 'Pshaw'.

<sup>2</sup> Had he not gone there would, said Asquith, have been no Ministerial Crisis and no Coalition.

<sup>3</sup> He is the creator of our own navy, and to a very large extent also of the German navy.

<sup>4</sup> He had a touch of genius, but his temper was ungovernable and he was 'a little mad'.

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'he has no doubt what the Americans call "hustle"' and then went on to say that there was nothing extraordinary about him in this, and that others could do and were doing quite as well. Then he repeated what Balfour had said about the difficulty of getting labour—that so many skilled men had enlisted and others gone into munition works. I asked how it was possible that that could have been permitted, and he said it had happened during the early recruiting boom when everybody was enlisting, and it would be happening again now were it not for the wholesome opposition of the Board of Trade and the scheduling of so many occupations as 'reserved'. These things he appeared to regard as normal and inevitable, and he added that everything was now being done to remedy the mischief. The men with the colours had been twice 'combed' for skilled workmen and no more could be got from that source. He praised Lloyd George for his policy of 'dilution' of labour, which he regarded as the one panacea. . . . He had relaxed during the interview—even smiled—and we parted with an informal good-bye.

Almost to the end of the war Scott persisted in these attempts, being scarcely discouraged at any point by learning that almost all public men had come to the conclusion that Fisher had by this time lost the physical power needed for the task Scott would have assigned to him. By a curious irony Mr Churchill, in whom Scott at this time had great confidence, had been the cause of Fisher's fall. In referring to that quarrel the *Manchester Guardian* had taken Fisher's side.

Scott's pertinacity in pressing the claims of a man whose gifts he considered indispensable was more successful in another case, for he was able to convince Mr Lloyd George and others that the chemical discoveries made by Dr Chaim Weizmann might be turned to a good use in the war. Dr Weizmann was a Reader in Biology in the University of Manchester, and he brought before Scott his plan for manufacturing chemicals needed for munitions. Scott paid several visits to London to urge on Mr Lloyd George, Mr McKenna, Lord Balfour, and others the importance of Dr Weizmann's

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experiments. Mr Lloyd George promised in the summer of 1915 to consider the question as soon as the issue of conscription had been settled. In December, Scott took Dr Weizmann to breakfast with him, and by February, as a result of the brilliant success of his experiments, Dr Weizmann was comfortably established in his post. During the last two years of the war he was a right-hand man.

The great importance of Dr Weizmann's services has been brought out by Mr Lloyd George in the second volume of his *Memoirs*. The Government were exceedingly anxious about the supply of acetone, an essential element in the manufacture of cordite. Acetone was produced from wood, and as Great Britain is not a great timber producing country, we were dependent upon imports from America. The serious danger to which this lack of supplies exposed us was averted by Dr Weizmann's discovery for producing acetone from maize, a process afterwards extended to horse-chestnuts, and in this way Dr Weizmann rescued the country from a very unpleasant predicament. When Dr Weizmann refused Mr Lloyd George's offer of an honour in recognition of this immense service, he asked that any reward he had earned should take the form of support for the cause to which he was most ardently attached. This was the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. From this time this cause had the support of Mr Lloyd George, and when Dr Weizmann was brought into touch with Lord Balfour he was able to interest Lord Balfour in the Palestine question as well as in his chemical discoveries. It has indeed been said that this was one of the few causes into which Lord Balfour ever threw himself with passionate ardour. During the Peace Conference he gave the strongest support to Dr Weizmann's efforts. Scott himself was not less ardent, and the Zionist cause was put and pressed in the *Manchester Guardian* with great power during the war and during the Peace Conference.

In the spring of 1916 the country was rudely reminded of a forgotten problem by the Easter rebellion, and the march of De Valera on Dublin. This disaster, the cause of many others, was the result of a failure of statesmanship. Birrell, the Chief Secretary, resigned and took the blame for it, but

the blame really rested elsewhere. To understand this episode and its sequel, we must look back for a moment to the beginning of the war. After Grey's speech on August 3, 1914, Redmond, as we have seen, acting on an impulse of imagination, took a striking and courageous step. He made a speech bringing Ireland into the war. Redmond's own sympathies were warmly enlisted on the side of the Allies, for he had never taken Dillon's view of Grey, and the outrage on Belgium stirred him deeply. But it is probable that he had larger views in his mind when he took this step. He knew Ireland well enough to know that she would not sit still, selling her butter and eggs, with the world on fire. That is not human nature; least of all is it Irish human nature. Redmond was fighting a hard battle for a Parliamentary and constitutional settlement of the problem of Irish government against a new movement which demanded a more dramatic and militant remedy. He knew that for a brooding and imaginative people there was nothing between active co-operation in the war and active rebellion. At first everything went well for his programme. Irish recruits came in quickly. Unfortunately the War Office was still steeped in the atmosphere of the Ulster quarrel, and all Redmond's efforts were checked and finally defeated by the cold blanket that was thrown over this enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> Ulster was given, Catholic Ireland was refused, everything she wanted in the way of recognition and encouragement. At a moment when the sympathy of the United States was in the balance the War Office behaved as if it would prefer to have Ireland hostile than Ireland an ally. After that *la fatalité s'accomplit*.

The rebellion itself, judged by the members who took part in it, was a trifle as rebellions go. It took Ireland by surprise, and the loss of life it caused was bitterly resented by Irishmen. But when it was over Asquith made the fatal mistake of putting himself in the hands of the soldiers who arranged

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd George said on October 28, 1916: 'Some of the—I want to get the right word—some of the stupidities which sometimes look almost like malignancy, which were perpetrated at the beginning of recruiting in Ireland are beyond belief.'

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a series of executions day by day, making a cold-blooded and vindictive impression. Ireland is a country in which the dead matter more than the living. All the memories of '98 leaped into life. T. P. O'Connor said that the first effect of the rebellion was to put Ireland behind Redmond, the second to put her behind Sinn Féin. Asquith, acting with great courage,<sup>1</sup> went to Dublin, when the mischief had been done, to visit the Irish prisoners, and he decided to make another effort at a settlement. Mr Lloyd George, to whom he always turned when somebody had to be chosen for a difficult or adventurous task, was sent to Ireland to negotiate. Mr Lloyd George thought he had the Cabinet behind him, but when he brought home an agreement between Redmond and Lord Carson, most of the Unionist members, resisting the appeals of Bonar Law and Balfour, refused their support; the Government nearly broke up, and the last chance but one of an Irish peace was surrendered to Lansdowne's misgivings. Yet, as Mr Spender points out in his *Life of Asquith*, General Maxwell, who attended the Cabinet, regarded those misgivings as groundless.<sup>2</sup> Scott spent an anxious time trying to help, discussing plans and difficulties with Redmond and with Dillon, who took a less favourable view of the proposed settlement than Redmond, and with Asquith and Lord Carson. He was naturally much distressed by the failure, and he thought that the loss of Lansdowne and Long would have been less of a disaster.

It would, however, be unjust to the Unionist dissentients to assume that the settlement would have been concluded if they had not opposed it. Their opposition destroyed the chance of a settlement, but that chance, if we may judge from Scott's impressions at the time, was precarious. Scott saw both Redmond and Lord Carson, and he realised that neither of them was his own master and that both of them looked to England to impose a settlement. No English Minister was strong enough for that task.

Though Scott's chief preoccupation was the management

<sup>1</sup> Dillon told Scott that he was seriously afraid for Asquith's life.

<sup>2</sup> Spender: *Life of Asquith*, Vol. II, p. 219. This gives a full and intimate account of the proceedings in the Cabinet.

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of the war, he was still deeply concerned about the larger problems of future policy.

In the autumn of 1916 he published an American Supplement containing articles by Bryce, Gilbert Murray, Eliot of Harvard, and ex-President Taft. Taft wrote on 'The League to enforce Peace', and Bryce's article was on the same theme. Bryce wrote to Scott about the origin of this scheme.

*September 6, 1916*

. . . I think the best text for an article I can take will be the adhesion of both W. Wilson and Ch. E. Hughes to the Taft League for Peace Scheme, which is practically the scheme drawn by our small English group here sixteen months ago, of which you have doubtless seen a confidential copy. We have kept it confidential, thinking the time has not come for it to secure public attention. But it is quite time to call attention to the great step forward taken in the U.S. by the candidates of both the parties, especially as the British Press correspondents have given scanty notice of so great a change in American policy.

Scott wrote to Bryce later about pushing this idea.

*November 4, 1916*

MY DEAR BRYCE,

Thank you for your letter. I wrote at once to Messrs. Headley Brothers and told them they had your permission to reprint your supplement article. As to whether the article has 'caught on' I think the best answer is to be found in Grey's speech. I have no special information, but it is at least a remarkable coincidence that, after so long a silence, he should so soon have taken up your theme. In any case the question has now been lifted into the first rank of public interest and acknowledged importance, and I believe this is largely due to you. . . . There is a party, 'not very strong I think yet, but which may grow stronger, which finds our only security in the complete 'crushing' of Germany. But the League would be a means for neutralising her power for mischief apart from any such desperate and difficult expedient. I cannot doubt on which side you

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would be. What, it seems to me, we have got to see to, is that it is not forgotten, and that it has its right effect on all our war policy.

In September 1916, Scott's confidence in Mr Lloyd George had the first of many sharp shocks. In an interview with an American journalist Mr Lloyd George warned the United States against intervention, talked of 'the natural demand for vengeance', boasted that England had met the German onset without 'squealing', and used the phrase 'the knock-out blow'. Scott criticised both the substance and the manner of this interview severely in his paper, and there was a coolness between the two men for several weeks. When they met in November, Mr Lloyd George told him that he had positive evidence that Gerard, the United States Ambassador in Berlin, had gone to Wilson with a project for mediation, that Wilson might have been tempted to comply by the prospect of conciliating the large German vote at the coming election, that intervention at that moment would have been exceedingly unfavourable to the Allies, and that Spring Rice, our Ambassador at Washington, had reported that the interview had had an excellent effect. Scott may or may not have been convinced by these arguments, but he was certainly reassured on one point, for though he still deplored Mr Lloyd George's crude language and the note of insolence that it struck, he came away satisfied that his bark had been worse than his bite and that he was not as uncompromising as he seemed. But for this conviction he would hardly have held so strongly to his plan of pushing Mr Lloyd George into a position of greater power. To that plan he turned more and more as disaster followed disaster in the East of Europe.

For these disasters were in part the result of the Government's weakness in diplomacy. Grey did his country a noble and little recognised service in keeping us out of a war like the war of 1812. At a time when, as Spring Rice said, our blockade was like a hair shirt to America, he treated with cold contempt the impatient



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clamour in the violent Press for a rougher hand with neutral rights.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if all the plans of the Allies in the Balkans went wrong, the fault was partly the selfishness of Russia, but it was partly the failure of a mind not alert enough to see and grasp its opportunities. With Grey's dilatory and haphazard treatment of this most urgent problem, Scott contrasted the astonishing change that Mr Lloyd George had brought about in our arrangements and equipment at home by his vigour, foresight, and courage as Minister of Munitions and Minister of War.

A letter that he wrote to Hobhouse in November 1916, shows how much he was impressed by the disasters of the autumn.

*November 28, 1916*

I enquired about your movements last night because I wanted to send this leader for your consideration. It was written under a growing sense of the futilities of the present conduct of affairs—witness the increasing sea-peril and the hideous disaster of Rumania—Ireland also—the fumbling half-and-halfness, more irritating than any resolute action, of our dealings with Greece—the long trifling with the military situation at Salonica—it is the same all round. Of course there is the question of an alternative. It must almost inevitably be Lloyd George, with Asquith possibly as Lord Chancellor and Balfour in some purely honorary office. But terms would have to be made with L. G.—e.g. the reinstatement of Fisher, and in some degree at least, of Churchill, and perhaps I ought to have a heart-to-heart conversation with him before taking any decisive step. . . .

Of course, he has from our point of view great defects of temperament and outlook, but it is a question of alternatives and of the immediate use of his practical and efficient qualities for a definite purpose. I have a growing conviction that with the present men we shall *not* win the war, and

<sup>1</sup> See the striking tribute paid to him by Page, the United States Ambassador. Page: *Life and Letters*, Vol. I, p. 367; Vol. II, p. 233.

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that the utmost we can hope for is a draw on bad terms. Hindenburg has changed the whole aspect of affairs for the Germans, George *might* do something of the same sort for us. What do you think?

The event to which Scott was looking followed rapidly, for within a fortnight of the writing of this letter Mr Lloyd George became Prime Minister. Scott took an active part in advising Mr Lloyd George during the crisis and in putting his case before the public. He left on record an account of his meetings with Mr Lloyd George during the decisive week-end.

*Private Papers: Sunday, Dec. 3/16*

Lunched with *Lloyd George* at Walton Heath and talked with him before and after, and drove back to War Office with him. He had not expected to return to London that day, but had received a summons from the P.M.—who had actually returned from (motored back) Walmer Castle, to which he had gone on Saturday for his inviolable week-end—to meet him at Downing Street. . . .

He explained his position and in some degree his policy. Had decided not to go on on present footing which was hopeless. P.M. conceived his function as that of Chairman of a Committee. He came to Cabinet meetings with no policy which he had decided to recommend, listened to what others said, summed it up ably and then as often as not postponed the decision. It was a futile method of carrying on a war. What was needed was a very small Committee of, say, three with very large powers, sitting day by day and controlling everything connected with the war at home as well as abroad. He had pressed this view on the P.M. and at the same time offered his resignation, and he showed me the letter. He suggested himself, Carson, and Bonar Law as members of the Committee. The P.M. not to be a regular member, and he made no mention of a Labour representative.

When I remarked that this was rather a tall order for the P.M. and that he might well regard it as inconsistent with his position, L. G. replied that there were precedents—that

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neither Salisbury, nor Gladstone, nor Lord Liverpool had endeavoured, in addition to the ordinary work of the Premiership, directly to supervise the conduct of war; that in a war of the present magnitude it would be doubly difficult, that the P.M. could not attend the War Committee every day and often twice a day; that, moreover, he would be liable to add continually to the numbers of those summoned regularly to the Committee even though not formally members of it, as he had done in the case of the present Committee, and that the new Committee would end by being very much like the old.

The difficulty about Carson was his demand for conscription in Ireland. He would have to abandon this. He (Ll. G.) would not countenance conscription till after Home Rule had been brought into operation. Then Ireland, having been put politically on the same footing as the rest of the Kingdom, must accept the same treatment. He was in favour generally of a conciliatory policy towards Ireland in regard to all the exceptional measures recently adopted.

In regard to conscription a mere tightening of the screw would be useless. If he had power he would seek to make it more discriminating. There were limits to what this country could do in regard to supplying men. Three tasks were sought to be imposed on us, (i) to keep the seas, (ii) to finance the Allies and provide them with munitions, (iii) to provide an army on the *full* continental scale. We could discharge any two of them, but not all three. This ought to be frankly explained to the Allies, so that they should know in advance and recognise what they could expect and what they could not expect. They had not been done. McKenna, for example, when a request was made for a big financial advance would grudgingly dole out half, and the impression given was that we were stingy and were doing as little as we could instead of as much. The whole war on all fronts ought to be treated as one, both in effort and in sacrifice, and a frank and effectual working understanding should be established among all the Allies, each contributing according to its special resources. He admitted that the Committee might, if it took the domestic side also of the war under its

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control, have grave difficulties with Labour, and suggested that, in this connection, Henderson might be able to render important assistance. . . .

When I remarked to Ll. G. that he might be accused of always making trouble and attacking the P.M., he admitted that he was the disruptive element in the Cabinet, but was of opinion that he had really done the P.M. a service, as if he had not goaded him to action he would have come to disaster long ago.

Ll. G. told me Northcliffe wanted to see me, so after leaving him I called at N.'s house. I doubt if N. had asked to see me, or any way, if he remembered doing so. He was interested in some things I told him—he did not know, e.g. whom G. designed for his War Committee—but couldn't bear not to be telling long stories himself all the time, so I just let him run on. . . . He was very keen about Carson—Robertson, he said, was a wooden sort of person, but he couldn't speak highly enough of Haig. People kept coming in—first 'X' . . . with his latest article which N. glanced at and passed, and then his brother, Leicester Harmsworth, M.P., who stayed on. N. was very civil, showed me the room where various 18th century literary notabilities had held conclave, and engravings of them, and presented me with a copy of his book.

Later he telephoned to me to Nottingham Place to tell me that the Unionist members of the Cabinet had held a meeting that afternoon and it had been decided that Bonar Law should support Ll. G.—a quite useful piece of information. Asked for quotation from our leader—especially in regard to Bonar Law.<sup>1</sup>

*Monday, Dec. 4/16*

Saw Ll. G. at War Office by appointment, 12.30. He confirmed Northcliffe's statement as to result of Unionist conclave on previous day. All ministers asked to resign, and P.M. had a free hand in reconstructing his Government. Nobody need accept office again unless he approved of the terms arranged as to the War Committee and its powers. . . .

<sup>1</sup> I was writing leader that day and had been for a week.—C.P.S.

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Congratulated himself on 'a very good press' that morning, but said *Chronicle* was all wrong—reflected the views of the military people. Shortly before this Robertson and another—I think the Quartermaster-General—had arrived and G. said he would see me again later.

Saw Ll. G. again at 5.30. . . . Urged him to be stiff in his terms since he had nothing to lose, but the contrary, by their rejection. They involved the degrading of the P.M. and of all the other members of the Cabinet who were to be reduced to comparative insignificance, and he couldn't expect these to be otherwise than hostile to him. He said he admitted all that and it had been strongly represented to him by others of his friends. But he had made up his mind, having made his proposal, to go through with it, though nobody would be better pleased than himself if it were rejected and his final resignation were accepted. Lord Derby had just been saying much the same things to him, and he had given the same answer. I urged him to press for Bonar Law's appointment to the Admiralty (so as to make possible Fisher's reinstatement). He inclined to Curzon. He was expecting momentarily to be sent for by the Prime Minister in order to continue their discussion of terms and, if possible, conclude agreement. But the summons never came.

*Tuesday, Dec. 5/16*

Saw Ll. G. at War Office at 11.30. He was much angered and excited. Said he had just received a letter from the P.M. going back completely on his previous undertaking, and that in consequence he had determined at once to send in his resignation (that is really his refusal to re-enter the Ministry), and he showed me the letter which was in the act of being typed by his secretary. He also showed me a letter he had received from Asquith on the previous day in which he recapitulated formally the terms of the agreement which they had reached on the previous afternoon, and allowed me to take a copy of these. The letter was quite short, on one side of a sheet of notepaper and in two paragraphs. The second and longer paragraph was the material one re-

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capitulating the terms. The first I did not copy—or even read—as Ll. G. said (evidently quite sincerely), ‘Oh! that relates to another matter and is of no consequence.’ This was the paragraph, afterwards read by A. at the Reform Club meeting, in which he called attention to the offensive leader in Monday’s *Times*, and said that if that were the interpretation to be put on the arrangement he could not go on. Ll. G. had treated this statement as not concerning him and as immaterial and had simply replied on the second, or material part of the letter that he accepted the arrangement as there stated ‘in letter and in spirit’. Now he received from A. a letter making entirely different proposals—viz. that he, Asquith, should be a regular member of the War Committee, that he should appoint the other members at his discretion, and that the Committee should not be restricted to three. George was obviously taken completely by surprise and very indignant. In his reply he remarked caustically that this was only another illustration of the indecision and vacillation on the part of the P.M. which had proved so ruinous in the conduct of the war, and that he had no alternative now but to withdraw from the Ministry.

I saw him again at the War Office in the late afternoon. In the meanwhile the Unionist members of the Cabinet—largely influenced no doubt by Carson as leader of the formidable ‘ginger’ group of Unionist members in the House—had followed suit with George, and Asquith, faced by the complete break-up of the Coalition, had sent in his own resignation to the King and advised him to send for Bonar Law. B. L. had agreed to form a Ministry if it would make it easier for Asquith to be a member of it. A., however, declined. Balfour urged him not to stand out, pointing out that he himself had been Prime Minister, but had not refused to serve under Asquith in a War Government. When A. persisted in his refusal B. L. declined to go on, and the King sent for Ll. G. This is the substance of what Ll. G. told me when I saw him in the afternoon. He then had Carson and Bonar Law closeted with him, and came out to speak to me. It was then his intention to ask all the Liberal members of the late Cabinet—except, of course, Asquith,

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who had already declined—to join the new Ministry, and the only doubt in his mind was whether he should send a collective or individual invitations. Finally he said to me he would send individual invitations. I pressed him to give Lord Fisher a place in the new Administration. He said he was afraid he could not give him office, though he would consider the matter, but suggested that he should be given a place on the War Committee—possibly he did not mean a place as full member, but as a member *ad hoc*.

I remained in London till Saturday, but was laid up with a bad cold and, though I was able to write the leaders, I did not see L. G. again.

The war lasted another two years, and it was marked by disasters that seemed to Mr Lloyd George's critics as grave as those that preceded and caused the change of Government. Scott himself never doubted that the new Government was a better instrument than the old. On the other hand, he became increasingly aware of the calamitous consequences that followed from the quarrel in which this crisis ended. For the failure to find a peaceful compromise the blame must be divided between the two chief actors and their friends and advisers. Their contrasted and complementary gifts made both Mr Lloyd George and Mr Asquith essential at that time. In combination they had given effect to a series of reforms, which Asquith would not have designed without Mr Lloyd George, and Mr Lloyd George would not have carried without Asquith. Two plans that seemed to have some prospect of success were proposed for averting a breach. The first proposal was that Asquith should remain Prime Minister, conceding to Mr Lloyd George exceptional and unusual powers. The second, that Balfour, who was friendly to Mr Lloyd George's ideas, should be Prime Minister, with Asquith and Mr Lloyd George serving under him. In declining both these proposals Asquith no doubt believed that he was saving the nation from an experiment he mistrusted, but his miscalculation brought disasters greater than those he would have risked in accepting Mr

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Lloyd George's novel plan. For the nation lost leaders whom it could ill spare, and it was cursed with a quarrel between powerful men, once comrades, haunted and paralysed by bitter suspicion of each other. The melancholy consequences will occupy the next three chapters.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE WAR—II

SCOTT believed that England had now a more capable Government, but he was uneasy about its politics. A few days after the events described in the last chapter he wrote to Sir Adolphus Ward.

*December 14, 1916*

. . . I am so glad you have thought we were right on the whole to put the best interpretation on the new ministerial arrangements. There is a great deal in them to criticise, and a great deal which remains to be explained. There will be force in the new Cabinet, but will there be wisdom? In any case I am profoundly convinced, and have been for some time, that success under the Asquith régime had become impossible or next door to it, and something had to be done, even something a little desperate. I strongly urged George to resign early in the year, and if he had done so it would probably have saved some six months of marking time or worse. I may be too sanguine, but war is not a thing one can play with.

I hope to be in London again before very long. It would be nice if you also should happen to be there. I rely more upon your political judgment than on that of almost anybody.

Yours ever,

C. P. SCOTT

Of course some people are now saying that we have been bought by Northcliffe, just as a little time ago they said we had been bought by the Kaiser. But I don't think the main body of our readers misunderstand us, to judge by the fact that the more we put restrictions upon the sale of the paper the more sales go up.

Scott's misgivings were increased a few months later by talks he had in April with two of Mr Lloyd George's

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principal colleagues, Milner and Curzon. After leaving Curzon he noted: 'The whole conversation was profoundly illuminating and unsatisfactory. And Milner and Curzon are now at the centre of power and the determiners of policy.' His chief anxiety was Ireland, for he felt that the great preponderance of Unionist influence in the new Government would have bad effects upon its policy. He tried to counteract this influence by bringing the Liberal leaders into touch with Mr Lloyd George, in the hope that the promise of their support would encourage Mr Lloyd George to take a bold course. With this object he called upon Asquith early in May, 1917.

### *Private Papers*

Asquith, at first a little icy, thawed rapidly when he found I had something serious to say and aimed at conciliation. I did not feel at liberty to explain fully Ll. G.'s policy, and made it absolutely plain that I came to him solely on my own initiative. I told him that I understood that the scheme for which he and Ll. G. were responsible, and to which Redmond and Carson had agreed, but which the Unionists had rejected, had now been accepted by them and something more besides, but that the Irish leaders now refused it, and I asked him if he had any plan in mind which could help. He said Ll. G. 'had not done him the honour to consult him either directly or indirectly on the subject,' and that 'I had now told him a great deal more than he knew before.' I said it was not for me to convey information and that I thought it very wrong of George not to have approached him. I asked if he would be willing to meet George on the matter if George desired it, and he said that certainly he would. Then he went on to say that his own idea had been that there should be a conference of representatives of all the political parties—not of the Irish parties only—with Smuts to represent the Empire, to discuss the matter and see if an agreement could not be reached (very like Ll. G.'s idea of a 'Speaker's Conference').

As a result of this interview Asquith and Mr Lloyd George

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met at dinner at Edwin Montagu's, but feeling was too raw, and suspicion too strong, for any effective co-operation.

Early in 1917 the whole face of the war was changed by the Russian Revolution. The spirit in which Scott took this event shows how lightly he carried his seventy years. Letters that he wrote to Hobhouse illustrate his enthusiasm and confidence.

March 21, 1917

. . . Anyway, the revolution is a wonderful and glorious event. I've telegraphed the salutation of the *Manchester Guardian* editor and staff to the President of the Duma. I gathered from a Russian of some distinction whom I met in London that this sort of expression of sympathy would be welcome. I fancy that things will go farther, and that, unless the heads of the army succeed in putting on the brake—which is doubtful—the Constituent Assembly will abolish the Tsardom.

March 25, 1917

It doesn't do to be too sure about the outcome of revolutions, but I am inclined to think that the Russian one is irreversible—also that the outcome will be not a limited monarchy (hardly intelligible to a Russian peasant) but a republic. I said to Ward when he was here on Friday that I thought it would come to that, and he replied at once, with great cheerfulness, 'Why not?' I felt that to be comforting. . . .

Don't you feel the Russian Revolution rather stirring in your bones, and making the growing invasion of personal liberty here more intolerable? The coldness with which this tremendous movement of political and spiritual emancipation was received by a great portion of our Press and society—bitterly felt by Russians resident here—seems to show how far we have drifted from the tradition of liberty.

I feel that perhaps we ourselves have not fought hard enough against the real persecution of the conscientious objector.

He soon found that some of his old friends could not share his Russian enthusiasm. Morley, whom he asked for an article or a letter for the special Russian Supplement that he published in the summer, sent a chilly answer.

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*June 2, 1917*

MY DEAR SCOTT,

I hope you won't take it amiss if I find myself unable to say yes to your proposal. I am sorry for it, but I cannot share the confident faith in the Russian future, that would hurry us to throw our lot in with it. I learned a good deal about Russian ways when I was responsible for the India Office, and I feel that it will take a long time for any Russian Government—republican or Romanoff—to be born over again.

I could say a good deal on all this, but I won't inflict a useless letter on you. Many thanks for the honour you do me.

Yours always sincerely,

MORLEY (*of B*)

The course of the Russian Revolution created a new set of political problems. There was, at first, a widespread hope that the Russian Revolution would create a Russia more vigorous for war, and the Revolution was consequently welcomed, not only by those who were glad to see a bad system of government overthrown, but also by others who, indifferent to this aspect, were glad to think that the fighting strength of the Allies had been increased. Before long all these hopes were tumbling, and by the autumn it was evident that Russia would soon cease to count as a military force. For in June the Russian offensive broke down, with the inevitable result that a great impetus was given to a peace movement in Russia. In September and October, Kerensky, struggling with great difficulties, tried to induce the Allies to moderate their war aims in accordance with Soviet principles. In November he fell, Lenin became all-powerful, an Armistice was concluded with Germany and arrangements made to negotiate at Brest-Litovsk in December. To the Russian overtures Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, replied that the Central Powers desired an immediate general peace without forcible annexations of territory, and without war indemnities. When the plenipotentiaries met round the

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table these Wilsonian formulas disappeared, and the Germans were clearly bent on imposing a peace of violence. The Russians shrank from accepting these terms, but the Germans gave them a sharp reminder of the realities by setting their armies again on the march, and the Soviet had to sign a humiliating peace in February 1918.

Such a change in the balance of power left little hope of the crushing victory for which the Allies had been looking. There grew up in consequence, as soon as it became clear that Russia was ceasing to count as a combatant, two different opinions about the policy Great Britain should pursue. The first opinion was held both by certain Imperialists on the right, and by certain Pacifists on the left. On this view the wise course to take was to make a bargaining Peace, giving to Germany compensations at the expense of Russia in return for the concessions we demanded from her in the West.<sup>1</sup> It was generally believed that Milner and his followers looked for some solution of this kind. They held that their first duty was to the British Empire, that such a Peace would secure the interests and safety of the Empire, and that Great Britain was under no obligation to wear out her strength in helping people who would not help themselves, or in defending an Ally who disregarded her convenience and her advice. One school of Pacifists came to the same conclusion, holding that the worst consequences which would follow from recognising German annexations in the East were far less dangerous to civilisation than the calamities that a prolonged war would bring upon mankind. One of the leading Pacifists said to Scott at this time that it was only Wilson's copybook morality that stood between the world and peace.

Scott and those Liberals who agreed with him took the opposite view. They held that the causes for which the Allies had entered the war would be fatally discredited

<sup>1</sup> 'That's the real eventuality to be feared, a German defeat in the West but a German victory in the South East. Everybody in Europe is so war weary that such a plan *may* succeed.'—Page: *Life and Letters*, Vol. II, p. 292 (July 1917).

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if it ended in a Peace which recognised the triumph of force over justice in the East. They held at the same time that the Allies ought to give all the help they could to Russia by meeting the Russian demand for reconsideration of war aims. This view was strongly urged by Mr Arthur Henderson, with whom Scott was in close touch and sympathy. Mr Henderson, who felt that a great chance had been missed when the British and French Governments refused to allow the Socialist Conference at Stockholm, feared that the Allies were going to make a second blunder forfeiting moral support all over the world.

The demand for revision and simplification of war aims pressed upon the Allies by Kerensky, was urged in November 1917 by a statesman whose politics were as distinct as possible from those of the Russian Left. In Lansdowne there was more of the eighteenth century than in all the rest of the House of Lords put together. He had inherited both its defects and its virtues. In the early eighties he had broken with Gladstone rather than let a finger be laid on the Irish land system, in which the old patrician order had shown itself at its worst and most selfish. But he had inherited also the view of duty which had inspired the conduct of the noblest members of that governing class, the view that the aristocracy had the right to govern because its experience enabled it to guide, and its independence enabled it to lead. The best men of the eighteenth century meant by leadership the free and fearless use by a man of the best of his mind, for in their eyes a leader ceased to be a leader if, instead of giving the nation his own judgment, he gave it an echo of its wishes or its fears, or if he adapted or surrendered his opinion to opinions that he mistrusted or despised. Moved by this imperious sense of obligation, Lansdowne published in the *Daily Telegraph* in November 1917, an argument for the revision and restatement of war aims, giving as little thought to his own popularity or reputation as his grandfather or

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Charles Fox had given to theirs' when a similar duty had called for similar courage during the war with revolutionary France.

The Lansdowne letter, it is now known, was written nearly a year earlier as a Cabinet memorandum. It was elicited by the famous 'Knock-out Blow interview', and it was really a reply to that intransigent manifesto. It produced something like a panic in some quarters, and Bonar Law called it a national misfortune.<sup>1</sup> Bonar Law himself was not an extremist. He was, as Mr Lloyd George has told us in his character sketch, a pessimist. He was dismayed by the letter, not because he wanted the kind of terms Lansdowne condemned, but because he thought the publication of the letter would encourage the military party in Germany. For the war had passed from the stage in which a nation is chiefly anxious to be regarded as in the right, to that in which it is chiefly anxious to be regarded as indomitable.

A little known incident illustrates the kind of impression that a Government wants to create in a struggle of this kind. In the spring of 1915, Colonel House suggested that Great Britain should drop the food blockade, and Germany the sinking of merchant ships. At first the British Government was unfavourable, the only supporter being Grey, who impressed House, whenever they met, by his steady and consistent refusal to let the necessities of war override all his humane instincts. Later Grey was more successful with his colleagues, and he was able to tell House that such an offer would be considered by his Government. House, knowing Grey's great caution, concluded that this meant that it would be accepted. Grey wanted Germany to be made to abandon in return the use of poison

<sup>1</sup> Montague, then at the front, wrote home at this time (December 3): 'From comments on Lansdowne's letter I gather it must be a Pacifist tract. On reading the letter I am surprised to find it a good declaration of war aims, likely to be approved by soldiers here, and useful towards victory. Our press seems to be in a queer state—talking hysterically in fear of being thought unpatriotic if it does anything else. It looks like the temper of defeat, but the plain soldier may still pull us through.'—*C. E. Montague: A Memoir*, by Oliver Elton, p. 192.

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gas, as well as the sinking of merchantmen. The proposal, however, went no further because Germany would not hear of it, unless the Allies took off also the blockade of raw materials. Thus the food blockade was really imposed on the German people by its Government, which refused to abandon offensive weapons in which it put its confidence, although the use of one of those weapons was bringing it nearer and nearer to a collision with the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing, surely, is more significant of the temper produced by such a war as the Great War, than the silence that was kept in England on this offer. If a reputation for humanity still counted at all, the revelation would have been of great moral value, in Germany and in the world at large. But by this time the reputation that a Government valued most of all was a reputation for firmness and tenacity. *Oderint dum metuant* was the spirit of all the belligerents, though some went further than others in their actions. If the Government had made these facts known, there would at once have been an outcry from the Northcliffe Press and all the violent elements in politics that Great Britain was weakening and that some false humanity was now admitted into her policy. It was excellent propaganda, in the view of a Government, to prove that your enemy was brutal, but it would be fatal if, in doing so, you gave the impression that you were ready to relax any pressure in your methods of war.

In such an atmosphere Lansdowne's letter was bound to cause anger and misgiving. It exasperated many whom Lansdowne despised, but it alarmed some whom he respected. A man was not necessarily a bitter-ender because he feared that its effect would be to strengthen the ruthless party in Germany, and so make it less easy to reach a settlement. Lansdowne himself must have felt that there were considerations of this kind to be weighed, or he would not have kept the document in his desk for eleven months before giving it to the world. If there is a criticism to be passed on his letter, it is that it would have been better published when it was written, before the Russian

<sup>1</sup> *The Intimate Papers of Col. House*, Vol. 1, Chap. 14.



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collapse had changed the fortunes of war. At that time it would have had more effect in Germany. Coming when it did it had excellent effects at home. The demoralising influences of war were painfully evident in our public life and in our Press. Slander had never been so reckless, unreason never so wild, suspicion never so cruel. At this moment Lansdowne took the most courageous step that was taken in the whole war. Even among those who doubted the efficacy of his letter for its purpose there must have been some who delighted to find that the old senatorial spirit was not dead. It was like Campbell-Bannerman's speech on the 'methods of barbarism'—a proof of mettle and character, when the numbing and cowering forces of mass sentiment were pressing hard on public men. It helped not only to make men think, but to break the tyranny of fear.

Scott wrote two leading articles in support of Lansdowne, in the second of them replying to Bonar Law and other critics.

On December 3, 1917, he wrote:

There is a great body of opinion, represented by powerful elements in the popular and Unionist press and in the Unionist party, which refuses to consider the war from any other point of view than that of 'smashing the Germans', or, in Mr Lloyd George's unhappily historic phrase, of 'the knock-out blow'. It takes no heed of making this process easier, by limiting our objects in the war to the most moderate which we and our allies can agree among ourselves to be necessary, or by disabusing the minds of the enemy peoples of the gross delusions fostered in them by their rulers as to the fate which we design for them in the event of our victory. That is one way of looking at the war and its issue. Another is the converse—on the one hand of restricting our general aims to those which are essential for depriving the enemy of any real fruit of victory, and thus permanently discrediting the whole policy and political and military organisation out of which the war has arisen, and on the other hand of taking steps

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to gain the advantage of this policy by letting the enemy peoples know that peace need not spell ruin to their national existence and all their legitimate future hopes. Both policies postulate an Allied victory, either directly by arms or indirectly by the exhaustion of our enemies, since the ends which the whole nation has in view can be looked for in no other way. The difference between the two is that the second would be likely to achieve its end a good deal sooner than the first. This is what Lord Lansdowne has perceived, and therefore has he spoken.

Scott called attention to a fact that was not brought otherwise to the notice of the British public; the support given in France by the *Temps* and other papers to the Lansdowne letter. The explanation is to be found in Colonel House's Papers, for Briand held strongly that the Allies were using force without brains, and that the war would end sooner if the world was told plainly on what terms Germany could have peace.<sup>1</sup>

Scott knew from his private talks that one of the reasons that deterred Mr Lloyd George from meeting the demand for a restatement of aims pressed by Russia, by Colonel House, by Lansdowne, and others in public and private, was his fear that Liberals would not support him. It was one of the disastrous results of the turn that events had taken in December 1916 that Mr Lloyd George, surrounded by alien influences, feared to take any liberal step because of his uncertainty about the Liberals with whom he had quarrelled so bitterly. Scott therefore determined to make another effort to get over this difficulty. For this purpose he communicated with Lord Buckmaster, on the suggestion of some of his Liberal friends, and his Diary gives the history and the result of their deliberations.

*Private Papers: Wednesday, Dec. 19/17*

Breakfasted with Buckmaster. Discussed possibility of an early peace, but pointed out the difficulty raised by Asquith, who always went 'one better' than George in his peace

<sup>1</sup> *The Intimate Papers of Col. House*, Vol. III, p. 285.

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conditions, and was believed by G. to do this deliberately in order to be able to represent any terms made by George as inadequate and such a peace as a bad peace, joining forces in this way with the Tory Extremists. B. seemed a good deal surprised and said he believed G. was quite mistaken as to A.'s attitude, and he was extremely glad to know that he was labouring under what he believed to be a misapprehension.

As to the question of the opportunity for peace, he entirely agreed with me that, however desirable military victory might be, the only rational test of victory was the ability to obtain the terms which you judged to be needful, and he read me a passage from a recent speech of his in which he had put this position very strongly and clearly. This of course implies a considered statement of terms and as to this *both* the great Parties in the State should join in consultation. He read me part of a memorandum to this effect which he had circulated among his colleagues. I suggested that it would be very desirable that George and Asquith should meet and discuss the matter, and he agreed. I promised to try to arrange for them to meet as I had done before on the Irish question, when, however, G. had found A. singularly unhelpful.

Went on to Downing Street, but the moment George came in from the Liberal Party breakfast at No 12 he was met by an urgent request from the American Ambassador to see him immediately, so he asked me to come to lunch instead.

Col. Hankey was also at lunch, but left early, and I had an hour with George afterwards. I told him of my interview with Buckmaster and of B.'s strong desire that he should meet Asquith. I pressed upon him the importance, in case the Germans failed in their present supreme effort, of seizing the opportunity for testing the possibility of coming to terms, as if we waited for America to come in in force, Italy and even France might fall out and leave us alone with America. He said he regarded military victory as necessary, *but perhaps the defeat of the present great German effort might be regarded as amounting to*

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*military victory.* I urged that an attempt should be made to come to an understanding with the Opposition, but he said the danger here was that the moment he made any advance towards meeting the Opposition he risked the loss of the Unionist support which was essential to him. In any case he would rather not meet Asquith. He could not trust A. to take a disinterested and not a partizan view of the situation. . . . Moreover whatever he said to Asquith would not stop there; it would all be given to the small men around him. . . . A. after all had a kind of intellectual bigness, though his personality was small, but these had not even that. He said he would rather not meet Asquith, but should be glad to meet Buckmaster, who was very straight and honest, but he should rather not meet him alone and would like me to be present. He was prepared to speak quite frankly to Buckmaster. He always preferred frankness. Sometimes perhaps he carried it too far, but he had rather err, if at all, on that side. . . .

Later in the afternoon I saw Buckmaster at the House of Lords and arranged with him to breakfast at Downing Street on Friday, which Davies told me was vacant. He said he should have first to ascertain that Asquith (with whom he was dining that night) had no objection. He thought he ought to be perfectly open with A., and I entirely agreed. He wrote to me later to say that A. had readily consented, but that if he were to meet Ll. G. it must be on the understanding that he was at liberty to inform Asquith of any part of the conversation which he thought he ought to communicate.

*December 27/17*

In the evening dined with Buckmaster to talk over the situation before breakfasting with Ll. G. next morning. The Bolshevik peace proposals and the Austro-German reply were in the evening papers, and formed a necessary starting point for all discussion. We agreed that the statement of the German terms was far too important to be merely thrust aside. I said I believed George to be disposed

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towards a moderate policy, but that he felt his position—between the Liberal Opposition whom, or at least whose leader, he believed to be only waiting for an opportunity to trip him up and his Unionist Allies, who would turn against him the moment he made any advance in the Liberal direction—to be extremely difficult. The first condition of freeing his hands was that he should feel he could rely upon disinterested support from the Liberal Opposition. B. entirely agreed.<sup>1</sup> . . . He also spoke of the importance of Grey as a moderating influence, and of his desire to take some part once more in the direction of affairs. There was no doubt that Grey, who was a man of sensitive feeling, was deeply alive to the fact that he was one of the two British statesmen most directly responsible for the war, or for the events leading up to the war, and his earnest desire would be to limit the disaster.

Speaking of George's future, he said he thought that, as things stood, he would inevitably be crushed between the hostility of Liberalism and Labour, and the distrust and dislike of the Tory party. His one chance was a reconciliation with Liberalism on a great issue like that of peace. I said the Tories were so poor as men that I did not think they could do without him and that he could lead them, even whither they would not, as Disraeli had done. But he had vowed to me again and again that he would not and could not ever join the Tory party. Still events might prove too strong for him. We must pray for his soul.

### *Friday*

We breakfasted with L. G., of course alone, and stayed a long time. I was surprised to find when we left that it was 12.30. We started at once on the Austro-German peace proposals, and Buckmaster read out the rather fuller and somewhat less hopeful text from *The Times*. 'I warn you,'

<sup>1</sup> He went further and said his view was that no Government could make peace because it would be too deeply committed to the war-spirit which it had fostered and incited. Peace could only be made by an Opposition.—C. P. S.

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said Ll. G., 'that I am in a very pacifist temper. I listened last night, at a dinner given to Philip Gibbs on his return from the front, to the most impressive and moving description from him of what the war in the West really means, that I have heard. Even an audience of hardened politicians and journalists was strongly affected. If people really knew, the war would be stopped to-morrow. But of course they don't know, and can't know. The correspondents don't write and the censorship wouldn't pass the truth. What they do send is not the war, but just a pretty picture of the war with everybody doing gallant deeds. The thing is horrible and beyond human nature to bear and I feel I can't go on with this bloody business: I would rather resign. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

'For some time,' said George, 'I have been feeling that there ought to be a restatement of war aims, but this (pointing to *The Times* which B. had just been reading) makes it necessary. There is a good deal of feeling in the War Cabinet towards peace—Balfour is not opposed—Milner is the most inclined to peace of anybody. Carson is nothing like so violent as he seems. In fact when you talk to him he is a very charming and reasonable person (my own experience). It is only when he makes speeches that he becomes 'so crude, so raw'. He seems to fancy he is counsel for the prosecution at the Old Bailey. I don't know about Curzon—he is very able, very just (he has never had sufficient credit for his Indian administration), a great public servant, but he is not very accessible to new ideas.'

'Still he will think of the safety of his order,' said Buckmaster, 'whom he regards as divinely appointed to manage the affairs of the nation, and when he realises that another year or eighteen months of war will strip them bare and extinguish them, as the French aristocracy were extinguished, he also will be in favour of peace.'

'No,' said Ll. G., 'he doesn't trouble himself about these things at all; he thinks of nothing but Empire. He is very "having" for the country; it would go to his heart to give up anything we had got.'

<sup>1</sup> But that, said Buckmaster, would mean a purely War Government.

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'Still,' said B., 'wealth is for him a necessity. You and I and Scott could be perfectly happy on £500 a year. But he could not live without a splendid house and lots of servants and everything suitable to his state. The next Government will be a Labour Government; I don't mean that there will be a Labour Ministry, but Labour will be strong enough to dictate policy and they will insist that wealth shall pay.'

'I am not so sure,' said G., 'about Labour dictating. "Labour" means skilled labour and there is quite as great a gulf between skilled and unskilled labour as between the propertied class and Labour generally. Besides Labour has shown itself in Parliament ineffective so far.'

I remarked that the new Labour party would be a transformed party, that it would not consist, as at present, of the hand-workers only, but would contain a very large proportion of the head workers, the so-called 'intellectuals'. 'These,' said G. 'would only be the Radicals over again.' I said 'Yes, but Radicals with a difference.' G. had evidently not quite waked up to what is before him.

George then repeated what he had said to me as to the difficulty of his position between Tories, who suspected him, and a Liberal Opposition always on the look out to take advantage of him. 'Yes,' said B., 'that is precisely why we must have a Union of parties. For months I have been urging this on my colleagues. I go so far as to say that no Government can make peace. Peace must be made by the Opposition with support from the Government.' 'That,' said G., 'would be a very great assistance.' It certainly had not been the case hitherto. On the contrary, whenever he had tried to make a move towards moderation Asquith had instantly come forward with more extreme terms. His Leeds speech was the most extreme and uncompromising speech delivered by a leading member of either party, and he had withdrawn nothing of it since. And so it was with the Liberal Press. In his conflict with the Generals, when he was endeavouring to assert the authority of the civil power in determining policy, and to curb the unlimited demands for men, and to turn the Generals' flank by establishing the



The daily ride





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inter-Allied Council and making the Paris speech, the *Daily News* and *Nation* joined hands with the *Morning Post* and *Spectator* in denouncing him for interfering with the soldiers, and very nearly succeeded in upsetting him, while the *Manchester Guardian* was the only paper which gave him support. As a matter of fact he had carefully abstained from interfering with the discretion of the Generals in matters of strategy. What he had done was to send Haig a written memorandum of his views, in which he had warned him that no serious advance could be made under present conditions in the West, that the utmost to be looked for was, at an immense expenditure of life, an advance of from 5 to 10 metres. They, on the contrary, declared they could get to Ostend. But his forecast had been almost literally fulfilled. Now they were again asking for men, more men and always more men, but he had told them that if they were going to spend them as they had spent them in 1915 and 1916 they would not get them. He, in his turn, had asked for a balance sheet. What exactly had been their gains and losses in the course of the year and how did they compare with those of the French. It had never occurred to them to ask for this information themselves. It proved that their losses amounted to just double those of the French. 'And it was while I was engaged single-handed in this struggle that I was furiously attacked in the Liberal Press. . . .'

. . . About this point George said 'I think I should like to see Asquith in connection with the new situation, and I must see him alone. There are certain things I can tell him which throw light on the present action of Germany, the authority for which he will understand and which he and Grey alone of the late Government will understand, just as Balfour and I are the only persons in the present Government who are in a similar position. The Cabinet as a whole is never informed and asks no questions; it takes its information simply on the authority of the Prime Minister.' It was then suggested that he might like to see Grey at the same time, and after a moment's reflection he at once said he certainly would; it would be better that Grey also should be present—Grey was a great figure and his influence would be

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valuable. Buckmaster at once charged himself to bring about this meeting at the earliest time possible. Unfortunately Grey was in Northumberland, and Asquith in the country, but not far away. George said the meeting could take place at any time and in any place convenient to them. He would put aside every other engagement. G. proceeded to say that in all such negotiations the difficulty was not with Asquith but with the smaller men about him, and pre-eminently with McKenna. McK. was a man of narrow mind, very competent and efficient within his limits, with very strong personal likes and dislikes, and completely dominated by these feelings. . . . He was in relation to Asquith like the chauffeur of a six-cylinder Rolls-Royce, who, merely by turning a handle could upset the machine into the ditch. It was he who, working first directly on Asquith and then indirectly through Grey and Harcourt, had upset the arrangement which he, Ll. G., had made with Asquith before the change of Government, and with which Asquith was perfectly happy.

'Believe me,' he said, 'there was not the least intention of displacing Asquith, and that this took place was entirely due to his having been persuaded to go back on the agreement he had made.' McK. had persuaded him that he (Ll. G.) could not form a Ministry, and that he would have to come back to Asquith on his own terms. (Buckmaster here remarked that he personally had never been of that opinion, and when asked, had said he had not the slightest doubt that G. could form a Ministry.) Asquith at that time was not quite himself. The loss of his son had greatly affected him and this made it easier for McK. to mislead him. B. remarked that on the present occasion McK. could hardly be an obstacle, since he, more than anybody, was committed to the view of the absolute necessity of an early peace. 'Ah! yes,' said Ll. G., 'but he will just wait to attack on some side issue.'

In regard to the decision of the Liberal Members of the late Government as a body not to serve under George, B. said he had himself approved that decision, because if they had not done so they would have left Asquith to bear alone the

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reproach of inefficiency in the conduct of the war which was the ground of the movement against him.

On the fundamental question of whether advantage should be taken of the Austro-German statement of terms to advance to more formal peace negotiations, George was reserved. The next step would no doubt be that a communication would be received from the Bolshevik Government, but the Bolsheviks could not be recognised as the Government of Russia, not even as the *de facto* Government, since they were in actual control of no more than half Russia. On the question of victory B. said he thought it might be fairly said that we had achieved it, since in every battle on the Western front this year, with the partial exception of Cambrai, we had won, and there were, besides, our conquests in Africa, Mesopotamia, and Palestine. His own view was that we had won the war at the Battle of the Marne. G. said it was not quite true that Cambrai was the only exception; there had been several bad set-backs not reported in the newspapers.

. . . . .

As we went away B. said he unfortunately had to go to Paris on Monday on Government business, but would do his utmost to arrange for the interview with G. before then. I said I thought his personal influence in bringing about co-operation of parties was very vital. He had a clear and perfectly disinterested policy, and he was prepared to fight for it. 'Yes,' said B., 'I certainly am.' In speaking of the obstacles to cordial co-operation he said it was true that Asquith felt bitterly about L. G.'s action, who, he held, had 'stabbed him in the back'. It was a great pity, also, that in forming his Government G. had not asked for the co-operation of his old colleagues as I assured him he had himself told me he intended to do. Even if they had not accepted it would have helped good feeling. As it was, the fact that he had asked Samuel, and him alone, made the omission of the others only the more marked.

Scott wrote to Hobhouse about these deliberations.

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*January 1, 1918*

. . . Yes, I think Friday's interview with George was very hopeful, and it came in the nick of time. Buckmaster and I were with George for over three hours. . . .

Buckmaster, whom I had not known before, is first-class, and ought to have a much greater political position. He struck me as absolutely sincere and disinterested, very clear-headed, well-judging, and able, and a real Radical. Besides, he has a great gift of speech. Of what other member of the late Liberal Government could as much be said? I put him head and shoulders above them all. What a misfortune that the Lord Chancellorship took him to the Lords, where, he says, 'he feels like a dog in a kennel'!

Early in the new year Scott returned to London for further discussions.

*Private Papers: Jan. 7-8/18*

. . . In the evening dined with Buckmaster. He told me of his experiences after I had left him on the Friday week previous. . . . He decided to see Asquith, and went down that evening and spent several hours with him. He began by reading him the exact terms of the memorandum which he had drawn up at the breakfast with L. G., stating the purpose and reasons for which G. wished to see him and Grey. A. was exceedingly unwilling to meet George. He gave no reason for this and said no word against George which his best friend could have resented, but it was evident to B. that it was his strong personal feeling against G. which moved him. It was only on B.'s strong representation that, under the critical circumstances existing, it was his duty to comply, that he finally consented to do so, but he made it a condition that B. should say that he would see G. if he regarded it as 'important in the national interest' that he should do so.

In the course of the conversation one of the reasons urged by B. was that the military situation was grave. 'Grave!' said Asquith, 'I should think it was grave! We shall be lucky if we escape without the Germans occupying the Channel ports.' Asquith undertook to communicate with Grey, but

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Grey was even more difficult. Buckmaster left on the Monday for Paris from which he had only just returned, and knew nothing more except that Asquith had met George twice.

We discussed George's statement of war terms reported in that day's paper, and B. agreed strongly as to its shortcomings in (i) giving no sort of recognition or support to the effort of the Bolsheviks to secure the honest application of the 'no forcible annexation policy' to the occupied Russian provinces (ii) failing to recognise the advance made by Count Czernin towards this policy, and to make this the starting point for a further exchange of views. We had both urged at the breakfast that this should be done and George, I reminded him, had rather markedly refrained from making any response.

### *Tuesday*

Lord Rhondda was at breakfast with George next morning and naturally we did not get much beyond Food-control during breakfast,<sup>1</sup> but I saw George for a few minutes before R. came and for a quarter of an hour or so after he left. G. started at once with enquiries as to how Buckmaster had got on with Asquith, and I told him exactly what B. had told me as to A.'s reluctance.

'Oh! yes,' he said, 'but A.'s reluctance was nothing to Grey's, and that though Grey is one of the two men primarily responsible for the war, and he surely ought to have been not only willing but eager to do anything he could towards stopping it. Do you know it was *days* before we could get him up from Northumberland. I saw Asquith first and then I insisted that I must see Grey also.'

I said I assumed they had agreed in substance to his statement of war-aims. 'In substance!' he said, 'I read every word to them, and then I told them that I should state publicly that they approved.'

<sup>1</sup> Amongst other things the consumption of oats by horses in training for racing was discussed. George admitted that the argument that racing was necessary, even in war-time, in order to select the best animals from which to breed, was a weak one. A suspension of racing would do no harm. The real difficulty was the fanatical opposition of Hulton and the Hulton Press. The moment a concession was made in this matter its whole tone changed.

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He asked me what I thought of the statement. Every word of it had been carefully considered and debated, and he specially instanced the reference to Alsace-Lorraine, of the phrasing of which he was evidently rather proud—'reconsideration' of the wrong, instead of 'reversal', a much more elastic word. The rhetorical touch, stand by them 'to the death', was not in the text but was an inspiration of the moment as he realised that Thomas was beside him, and turned to address him.<sup>1</sup> It had given immense satisfaction in France, and in the warmth of those words the slight reserve of the other had been lost sight of. 'The French,' he said, 'are an impressionable people.'

I told him of the two points in which I had felt the speech to be disappointing: (i) the absence of any response to the effort of the Bolsheviks to save the freedom of the occupied provinces, for which they were putting up a good fight—not indeed with our weapons but with their own of a pacific offensive, and driving a wedge between the German Socialists and their Government. 'No,' he said, 'they are not. Believe me, I know. It is a make-believe and they mean to give way. They will run like whipped hounds.' He said this with a particular significance which made me almost sure that this was the particular information the source of which would be known to Asquith and Grey, and of which he could speak to them but, as he said, to no one else. I merely replied that in any case it was not for us to discourage them by assuming it in advance and publicly casting them off. (ii) I regretted that he had not recognised the great advance made by Czernin towards our point of view in his acceptance, as against the German Chauvinists, of the policy of 'no forcible annexations', making this the starting point for further approximation. He made the rather lame defence that if he had seemed to play up to Czernin the Germans would at once have become suspicious of a secret understanding, and called the Austrians to order.

Scott's criticisms of Mr Lloyd George's War Aims speech led to the following correspondence:

<sup>1</sup> M. Albert Thomas, French Minister of Munitions.

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January 15, 1918

MY DEAR SCOTT,

The *Guardian* is treating me very badly over my War Aims speech. I should have thought the risks I took in order to produce an atmosphere of reason in our peace demands would have entitled me to more considerate treatment from a paper which has so consistently urged a moderate statement of War Aims by the Government. Just take, for instance, this passage from your article this morning:

'Meanwhile we have apparently no policy except to stand aside in offended helplessness. Instead of giving such aid and sympathy as is due to the struggle, courageous and unexpected as it is, which the Revolutionary Government of Russia is making to resist what is virtually the forcible annexation of the provinces in German occupation, our Prime Minister has announced in advance that it is of necessity hopeless, and has, moreover, announced this with no obvious appearance of regret.'

If you will look at what I said you will realise how grossly unjust this comment is. I will give you this quotation from my speech:

'We all deplore the prospect. The Democracy of this country mean to stand to the last by the Democracies of France and Italy and all our other Allies. We shall be proud to fight to the end side by side with the new Democracy of Russia; so will America and so will France and Italy. But if the present rulers of Russia take action which is independent of their Allies, we have no means of intervening to arrest the catastrophe which is assuredly befalling their country. Russia can only be saved by her own people.'

I begin with the very expression of regret which you deny to me. I then say we shall be proud to fight to the end by the side of Russian Democracy, but that we cannot do so unless the Russians themselves are prepared to co-operate. Surely that is an obvious truism! But there is a great difference between that and saying that I have announced in advance that the effort of the Russian Government to resist the forcible annexation of the occupied provinces is of necessity hopeless. It is quite untrue, and I am sure you are



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the last man in the world who will countenance the misleading of the public by such distortion of fact. It is very difficult to fight the battle of commonsense in this war when you have against you the extravagance of the Jingo and the cantakerousness of the Pacifist.

Ever sincerely,

D. LLOYD GEORGE

*January 17, 1918*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Need I say that the last thing I could wish, knowing the difficulties by which you are surrounded and the weight of your responsibility, is that the paper should be unfair to you. We rejoiced, as did all reasonable people, at your timely and courageous statement of terms. It was a great step forward. But the reference to Russia seemed defective. You were prepared to co-operate with them in arms, but appeared to give no support to their political offensive which is now their only weapon. One would like to pin the Germans to the policy laid down by the German Reichstag, and its reassertion by the Russians seemed a fine opportunity. It was the apparent lack of backing for them in that which one regretted. I am delighted if that was not meant.

The statement in the leader about the absence of regret was wrong—though it was not meant, I think, quite in the sense in which you took it—and I apologise.

Yours very sincerely,

C. P. SCOTT

The truth was that Scott believed that Mr Lloyd George was inclining to the plan of compensating Germany in the East, for concessions in the West. After an interview with Mr Lloyd George he wrote in his diary: 'The rather startling fact became quite patent to me that George did not want to defeat the German ambitions in the occupied provinces—that, in fact, he was now bent on giving effect to the policy, which he would have adopted even under the Kerensky government if he could have carried it in his Cabinet, of paying the Germans in the East in order to square them in the West. . . . It savours rather of the

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'real politik' of Bismarck than of Wilson's idealism which we are supposed to share. But, as George remarked at breakfast to Rhondda, and as Buckmaster had even more emphatically remarked to him, "it is a difficult thing to make peace," and he is apparently seeking a road along this devious path.'

In Scott's view the hope of victory and a reasonable peace had come to depend almost entirely on America. Sir William Wiseman, employed by the Foreign Office as liaison officer between Wilson and Balfour, had given him an insight into Wilson's intentions and difficulties.

*Private Papers: Aug. 24/17*

In the morning had a call from Sir William Wiseman, on the introduction of Granville Barker. . . . He asked me what I thought of the temper of the English masses, and their real attitude towards the war. I said I thought they were puzzled and uneasy as to the objects and probable duration of the war, but that they would go through with it at all costs. My own view as to the Government's policy was that all the talk as to particular terms was at bottom insincere, and that the one condition which to the mind of the Government was fundamental was a military victory—not necessarily the 'knock-out blow' of which L. G. prated, but still something sufficient to break the prestige of the German military autocracy. With that view I had a good deal of sympathy. The same result could be obtained by the imposition of peace terms which would obviously and clearly imply the acknowledgment of defeat—such as the retrocession of Alsace-Lorraine, or some of the greater part of Alsace-Lorraine (with, of course, the complete evacuation, without conditions, of Belgium and the other and less difficult peace conditions).

He said the President would not concern himself, in the reply he would shortly make to the Pope's letter, with territorial questions, but would state as the one condition on which America could make peace that it should be made with a democratic and not an autocratic Germany. I said

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that if that meant that he would not make peace with the Hohenzollerns, that went beyond any terms yet proposed. He replied that it did not, but that it did mean that he would make peace only with the German people, and not with an autocratic German government. I asked if he knew what reply our own Government would make, and he said he *hoped* they would make no reply till the President had made his, and then say they had nothing to add to it.

He spoke of the immense power of the President, especially in war-time, and he said it was practically supreme. Neither Congress nor Senate counted for anything to speak of, and there were in effect only two powers in the State—the President and the Press. I remarked that there appeared to be ground here for a rather effective retort by the German autocrat, though, of course, the political conditions were in fact quite different in the two countries; and he could not deny that it was so.

*Private Papers: Dec. 27-28/17*

To London Thursday morning:—Sir W. Wiseman called at Nottingham Place in the afternoon to see me before starting for America. Said Colonel House had asked him to report his impression of Inter-Allied Council Meeting in Paris. Evidently he had felt it to be futile. 'He could not get on with the representatives of the Allies (other than England) at all. The moment you approached any real difficulty they evaded it in generalities and verbiage.'

His impression was that England and America would have to finish the war alone, or America would finish it by herself. Obviously this was the reflection of the impatience of the plain and sincere man going straight for realities against the humbug and subterfuges of the received diplomacy. Perhaps also it indicated a certain lack of appreciation of the complexities of European politics. This was one of America's difficulties; another was the fact, which ought to be clearly recognised, that throughout America there was a very real sympathy with Germany as a whole and as a nation, in spite of the crimes committed in its name, and a desire that it should come out of the war without any deadly or lasting

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injury. Wilson's view of the conflict with Germany was that it was for the assertion of certain moral and legal principles, and that before peace terms could be even discussed with Germany she must be forced to acknowledge her violations of international right in (i) the violation of Belgium (ii) the unlimited submarine war. To have compelled her to do this would be victory. Then everything else could be discussed.

This view of the American Government had not yet been communicated to the British Government, but it would be very shortly. The Foreign Office would be horrified. Its hair would stand on end. But that could not be helped.

In February 1918, Scott had a talk with Professor Frankfurter, Professor of Law at Harvard, at that time Assistant to the Secretary of War, on whose behalf he was visiting London and Paris. Professor Frankfurter asked Scott to put his views about Wilson's position and opportunity, in writing, and Scott wrote him the following letter.

*February 4, 1918*

DEAR MR FRANKFURTER,

What I want to say can be put in a very few words. I feel most strongly that the influence of America, the personal influence of the President, needs to be made without delay to tell far more directly and strongly upon the whole war policy of the Allies. America is even now, and will become more so every day, the predominant partner in the war. Without her aid it could hardly go on, or at least not in its present form or with any near prospect of success. She has, therefore, a corresponding responsibility for the policy of the war, not merely for its ultimate objects, but for the developments day by day by which the attainment of those objects may be helped or enormously hindered. This at present she fails to assert. Momentous decisions are taken without her being effectively consulted, or exerting her proper authority. On two signal recent occasions the President has been compelled immediately to dissociate himself in a speech from the policy embodied, in one case in a speech of the Prime Minister, in another in a formal statement by the

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Versailles Council. The President's statements of policy in his speeches are invaluable; they are the only clear and authentic expression of the Liberal and democratic policy by which, in words at least, our conduct of the war is supposed to be guided. They awaken an eager response in all that is best of Liberalism and Labour in this country, so that President Wilson has now come to be the accepted leader of our democratic forces. But speeches are not enough. What is needed is a direct and authorised representative of the President in this country acquainted with his whole mind, in constant touch with him, and speaking for him with authority. Our Government is not a Liberal and democratic Government. Broadly speaking, it is an Imperialist and reactionary Government despite the personality of the Prime Minister, who cannot, unsupported as he is by any great party or party machinery, do more than influence without controlling it, and lacks besides some of the essential qualities for such leadership. If the ideals and true purposes of the war are to be made to prevail, it can only be by the direct and continuous assertion of American influence.

Yours very sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

Any idea that Ministers might have entertained of a bargaining peace with Germany, giving in the East and taking in the West, was destroyed by the decision of Ludendorff in the spring to hazard everything on a great blow in France. On March 21, 1918, the blow was struck. Sixty-four German divisions, attacking a British force of nineteen divisions with thirteen held in reserve between Arras and St Quentin, broke through on a front of nearly fifty miles, uncovered the road to Paris and nearly reached Amiens. The Allies met this challenge by giving Foch supreme command and making an urgent appeal to Wilson. On April 4th the attack on Amiens was checked, and by the end of the month our front was stabilised. Then came the great attack on the French, with successes almost as striking as those that followed the first blow at our Fifth Army. Paris was again in danger. But by the middle of July this attack had failed

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and Foch had begun his great offensive. By the end of July there were a million American soldiers in France. The Germans had lost their race with time. While still able to make a tolerable peace, they had staked everything on this chance of a crushing victory, and involved themselves and the world in the consequences of a crushing defeat.

Scott's letters at this time are interesting for the light they throw on his spirit in anxiety. His anxiety was personal as well as public, for his son, E. T. Scott, a gunner, was in the army that was swept away before the first German attack, and he was taken prisoner. For some time Scott had no news of him.

March 28, 1918

DEAR HOBHOUSE,

Surely you are *much* too gloomy. It distresses me because I am confident you are wildly wrong, and to you it must be torturing. The Germans are not demi-gods, they have an enormous task before them, France has only begun to put her strength into resistance, and our army, though forced back, is unbroken and nearer its supports. Of course everything *may* go wrong, but also it mayn't, and I plank heavily on the more hopeful alternative.

You'd feel lots better if you were here and at work. Alone, and with all this bad news coming in, I can understand how it preys on you. . . . No news yet of dear Ted, and there is a very bad report to-day in the *Evening News* from the Press Association man of what happened to the left wing of the St Quentin—La Fère defence force—just where Ted was.

Yours ever,

C. P. SCOTT

April 6, 1918

A letter has come to-day from Montague, and it brings bad news. Ted is missing—has been since the first day—why it was not officially reported I can't tell—it isn't even yet. But M. has seen Ted's brother officers, and they say he was forward observation officer—work at which he was very good—on the day of the attack, and has not been heard of since. There is just one comfort. He is not likely to have

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been left wounded. Either the German flood would sweep round him and he would be captured or he and his two telephonists would be seen and killed.

*April 25, 1918*

Ever so many thanks to you and yours for your kind thought for me. It is an extraordinary relief. We could hardly believe the good news at first, as it reached us in so unexpected a way—by a rather uneducated note from a quite humble address in Moston. However, we dashed off in a taxi and found it was all right. The thrifty Bosche has now adopted the plan of sending five addresses on a post-card to a sixth, and requesting the sixth person to communicate with the other five. It works quite well.

Much had happened since December 1916 to throw doubt on Scott's view that the new Government would be a better executive force than the old. Nobody could say that the new problems raised by the Russian Revolution had been treated with greater wisdom or promptness than the problems that had proved too difficult for Asquith's Government. But in the crisis of the spring of 1918, Mr Lloyd George had shown the qualities for which Scott admired him. One of his ablest critics said of his conduct in appealing to Wilson and in concentrating all our shipping on the task of bringing the American soldiers to France, that it was 'one of the bravest things which was done by any statesman during the whole course of the war.'<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, if Mr Lloyd George justified Scott's confidence in one respect, he justified Scott's mistrust in another. Scott had feared for some time that Mr Lloyd George's new associations and his exercise of almost absolute power had undermined his liberalism. This view was soon shown to be correct.

In May of the previous year, strong pressure had been put on Mr Lloyd George, both by Spring Rice, our Ambassador in America, and by Wilson, acting through Page, the American Ambassador in London, to make an Irish settlement. 'The fact that the Irish question is still unsettled,' wrote

<sup>1</sup> *Mr. Lloyd George and the War*, by Walter Roch, p. 210.

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Spring Rice, 'is continually quoted against us as a proof that it is not wholly true that the fight is one for the sanctity of engagements or the independence of small nations.' 'The President wishes,' recorded Page in his instructions, 'that when you next meet the Prime Minister you would explain to him that only one circumstance now appears to stand in the way of perfect co-operation with Great Britain. All Americans who are not immediately connected with Germany by blood ties, find their one difficulty in the failure of Great Britain so far to establish a satisfactory form of self-government in Ireland. . . . Say this in unofficial terms to Mr Lloyd George, but impress upon him its very great significance.'<sup>1</sup> Mr Lloyd George decided to make another effort at settlement, and Scott went down to Bath to discuss plans with Redmond, who was there for his health, and if possible to break down Redmond's suspicion of Mr Lloyd George. The ultimate result was an offer from Mr Lloyd George, in May 1917, either to bring the Home Rule Act into operation<sup>2</sup> with the exclusion of six counties, or to set up an Irish Convention. The second alternative was suggested privately by Redmond. Scott helped Mr Lloyd George with these plans and with the drafting of his letter of invitation. The Convention, over which Sir Horace Plunkett presided, met in July 1917, and after a chequered career presented a report in April 1918. Redmond himself, who had tried in vain to arrange an agreed report, had died of disappointment the previous month.

The report could not have come at a worse moment. England, who had gone into the war like a knight, had long been fighting as the prisoner of circumstance. The glory of saving the world had faded into a hard, monotonous, and interminable duty. Then came Ludendorff's grim challenge, and the demand for new effort and new sacrifice. The age limit for conscription was raised to fifty. It was at this crisis of the war that the Irish Convention presented its report.

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Friendships of Spring Rice*, Vol. II, pp. 392-393. *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Vol. II, p. 255, quoted in Gwynn's *Life of Redmond*, pp. 543-544.

<sup>2</sup> The original Home Rule Bill had been placed on the Statute Book in September 1914, together with a Bill suspending its operation.



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One feature of that report was a unanimous declaration from the sub-committee on defence, signed by Covenanters as well as Nationalists, to the effect that it would be impracticable to impose conscription without the consent of an Irish Parliament. But Mr Lloyd George believed that there was popular resentment in England over Ireland's exemption from the great and growing burden she was bearing, and he was at once afraid of this sentiment and subject to it himself. The report was signed on April 8. Next day Mr Lloyd George announced that conscription would be extended to Ireland; that, in other words, England was going to treat Ireland as Austria-Hungary and Germany treated the Czecho-Slovaks and the Poles. Asquith made an impressive protest, but neither Ministers nor Members kept their heads, and by the 13th the proposal had been carried through Parliament. Thus all the blunders that had thrown Ireland into rebellion under Asquith's Government were now consummated by this final blunder on the part of his successor.

Scott wrote to Hobhouse on April 12: 'I should like to turn out the Government on the question of conscription in Ireland, if it weren't that we can't afford a change of Government just now—still less a General Election into which the present Government are quite capable of plunging us.'

He wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* on May 11, 1918:

Mr Lloyd George's Government has been in power for a year and a half. It has done some very good work; it is now preparing to do some very evil work. The good it has done—not, it is true, without qualifications—has been in putting fresh heart into the conduct of the war and in bringing about, at long last and with heavy penalties for the delay, unity of command. The evil it is preparing is more instant and unqualified. If not restrained, it will within a few short weeks undo, and much more than undo, all the progress which has been made, since Mr Gladstone first undertook the work, in the pacification of Ireland. . . . That is the prospect, and we do not believe we have overdrawn the picture. We should be glad to believe that we had over-

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drawn it. But all the information that reaches us, whether from public or from private sources, goes to show that the Government are deliberately preparing catastrophe.

He was in constant communication with Dillon :

*April 26, 1918*

I had thought of going over to see you, but like you I find it hardly possible to leave my post, and I can probably be of more use here. I shall probably be seeing L. G. again in a few days. Of course I realise with you all the folly and wickedness of the course on which he appears to be embarked, and it would seem hardly credible, apart from some sinister design, did not one learn more and more every day of the almost limitless folly possible to governing men.

I rejoice to know that the Irish party is likely to take part at least in the later stages of the discussion of the Home Rule Bill, but as it is likely to be put through under closure in a few days—if the House will permit—it would be very desirable that you should be there from the beginning. The country has not at present the least idea of the abyss towards which we are heading, and the only way of effectively informing and rousing it is on the floor of the House. Of course it would be far better to overthrow this Government than to allow the policy now contemplated to go through. The war situation is now less critical, but the forces of opposition are disorganised and the Parliamentary situation may be rushed. As to accounting for L. G.'s action in raising this question now, apart from an intention to wreck Home Rule, I admit the difficulty, but you have to bear in mind (i) his love of and exaggerated belief in the value of force; (ii) his eagerness for more men—conscription would at least give him four or five Divisions from Ulster; (iii) his conviction that only by imposing conscription can he carry his Government for Home Rule; (iv) his belief that the Home Rule movement in Ireland has developed, or is developing, into a definitely Separatist movement, and that the question

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of the control by the Imperial Parliament of the armed forces of the Crown (which includes the raising as well as the use of them), is the touchstone of this.

I am still quite clearly of opinion that the explanation of his policy is to be found in these considerations and not in any ulterior design, and that he intends quite definitely to force through both parts of his policy. Unfortunately, unless by utmost restraint and good guidance, they are likely to prove incompatible. . . .

*May 10, 1918*

I don't know what is your intention and that of the Parliamentary Party as to returning to the House of Commons, but I would put it to you as earnestly as I can that you ought to be there. To the best of my belief George has made up his mind to go through with conscription at whatever cost. The only way of stopping him is by defeat in Parliament, and that can be done only by aid of Irish votes. You also are the only people who can bring home effectively to the public here the meaning of what is happening or may happen in Ireland.

I understand that Asquith is inclined to move (at least so Geoffrey Howard tells me), but he needs coaching and 'gingering up'. I can quite understand that you would prefer to have nothing to say to the Home Rule Amending Bill which, even if under other conditions you might have welcomed it, becomes, in presence of conscription, an irrelevance; but as you well know it is impossible to foresee at what moment (often quite unexpected) the opportunity of effective intervention may not occur, and you are equally in the dark as to the moment which the Government may choose for starting the conscription campaign. Of course you are aware of much of which I am unaware, but that is how the matter presents itself urgently to me.

Yours very sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

People here won't in the least understand why, if in truth there is the great danger impending, you are not in your

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places to warn and to give aid, and your absence will immensely damage you with the already somewhat impatient British public.

If Scott had the best of reasons for taking a gloomy view about the Irish prospect, he thought he had good reason for taking a gloomy view about the prospect of Peace, so far as that prospect depended on the temper of the Government. In August, he had a talk with Mr Walter Lippmann, who asked him whether the Government would accept reasonable proposals if Germany were to make them. 'I said I was convinced that if the Government accepted them, the mass of the people would follow them gladly, but I could not answer for the Government. Lloyd George was not really a bitter-ender and wanted to make peace in certain moods, but he was unstable, had no real hold on political principle, was swayed by his surroundings—at present bad, was largely in the hands of his reactionary associates, and would make no heroic sacrifice.' In the same conversation, he said that the only Progressives in the Government were General Smuts and Mr H. A. L. Fisher, and Mr Fisher was talked of for the post of Ambassador to the United States.

With the victories of the Allies in the Autumn, everybody's mind was turned to the question of the armistice terms. Scott wrote two letters to Hobhouse that are interesting in view of the history of the Peace Conference.

*October 28, 1918*

I am afraid I have not left much of the fabric of your two paragraphs standing, but its drift and purpose remain. The fact is that the preliminaries of peace *must* be included in the armistice just because the armistice must be, in effect, a complete surrender. Therefore it must be cards on the table and all our objects declared. Happily the Wilson terms are ready, or there might indeed be great opportunity for delay. They are not only ready but accepted, and any variants from them can be swiftly disposed of. I saw George on Saturday. I think he means

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to put the whole thing through during his present visit to Paris, and to my surprise and joy he told me that Clemenceau also wants immediate peace. Foch would not, he thought, demand extravagant military terms. The trouble might be with our stupid admirals.

His variants are two: (i) Freedom of the Seas in the German acceptation cannot be admitted; (ii) he wants indemnity for all merchant ships illegally sunk. France, no doubt, will also want indemnity for illegal and wanton ravage. We are not out of the wood, but always remember Germany is *absolutely done* and has not a kick left in her. The defection of Austria to-day is the last blow. She must have peace and have it at once *coûte que coûte*.

October 31, 1918

The question of the Armistice is a little complicated. The actual armistice will, I imagine, be a purely military agreement, and we ought, as far as possible, to avoid raising any other questions in connection with it. But the Wilson terms, which are Preliminaries of Peace, are implicit, and unless, therefore, we are prepared to accept them *literatim*, we ought to say in advance if in any respect we differ. George did appear to accept them without qualification, but I don't think we can accept in advance Freedom of the Seas as understood by the Germans and as they might suppose Wilson to intend. At the same time, if the League of Nations is made effective, the whole question becomes irrelevant, and that is probably what Wilson had in mind. The question of compensation for sea losses is quite another matter, and it is a great pity it should be raised, unless by way of set-off for the purchase of colonies. I don't understand that either of these matters would be included in the terms of armistice, but that we should give notice in advance if we intend to raise them at the Peace Conference.

The war ended at last, leaving behind it some terrible problems, and Scott knew enough of English politics to feel a good deal of anxiety about them. A message which

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he sent to the *New York World* early in December showed that he looked chiefly to President Wilson for their solution.

The presence of the President at the Peace Conference appears to me necessary, first, because it is the policy enunciated by him which has been accepted by the Allies as the basis of the future world settlement, and he can best expound and most effectively defend his own policy; secondly, because he is the only statesman of the first rank who has concerned himself seriously to think out any policy at all; thirdly, because he is a very great man and has addressed himself to the whole problem in a large and disinterested spirit, and because the principles he has sought to establish, if honestly applied, would give us such a peace as would in truth compensate for the immense losses of the war. Let there be no mistake. He will not have an easy task. Chauvinism is not dead, Imperialism is not dead, in any of the great European countries, and selfish interests will make a hard fight against justice and the larger view of policy. Of all the nations, America seeks least for herself, is most detached from European quarrels and ambitions and all the perverse traditions of the old diplomacy, [and] entered the war with the loftiest purpose. By her effort and her sacrifice she has beyond question turned the course of the war and given us a swift and unqualified victory. Let her show herself equal to the great occasion, and help to give us also a peace such as our children may have reason to be proud of. It can only be done by putting her power, without hesitation and without stint, at the back of her President.

Anxious and foreboding though he was for Mr Lloyd George's future, Scott had no doubt that the victory was due to his energy and initiative. On November 30, 1918, he wrote in a leader, 'He has done more than any other man in public life to win the war.'

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PEACE CONFERENCE

BEFORE the Armistice negotiations had been concluded, Mr Lloyd George came to a momentous decision. He wrote to Bonar Law on November 2nd that he had made up his mind that a General Election ought to be held as soon as possible. No time was lost. Mr Lloyd George and the Unionist Whip, Sir George Younger, surveyed the constituencies and candidates, and a proscription list was made out, which differed from the lists of the famous triumvirs in that the victims were much less equally divided. By the end of the year a House of Commons had been elected which gave the Coalition leaders four hundred and ninety-seven supporters.<sup>1</sup> In Ireland the effect of the Government's policy was seen in the destruction of the Parliamentary party, which was now reduced to seven members.

As soon as the first inkling of Mr Lloyd George's intentions leaked out, Scott made an emphatic protest.

'Such a Government, so elected,' he wrote in a leader on November 1st, 'would have no real authority for the future. It would have selected a moment when the country was, as it were, disarmed and all political parties but its own at a disadvantage and in disarray, in order to seize power.'

He wrote to Dr Weizmann a little later :

*November 19, 1918*

DEAR DR WEIZMANN,

You know I would do anything in my power to help the Zionist cause, and it is not time or trouble which would

<sup>1</sup> The Coalition majority included 359 Conservatives and 127 Liberals. The non-Coalition members included 63 Labour members, 34 Liberals and 26 Conservatives.

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stop me from going to Paris, but I am afraid my duty will keep me here. I could no longer help you through Lloyd George, whom I am engaged in opposing on the Election issue—a really wicked thing to have dragged that across the trail of the Conference. Possibly I might with Wilson, but I hope to see him in England, and I expect you will find him already entirely friendly. He is our main stand-by in all matters of high policy and of justice. Ll. G. means well, but is far more squeezable. Wilson can be like a rock once his mind is made up and principle is at stake. Ll. G. doesn't know (it is an intellectual defect) what principle means.

Yours very sincerely,

C. P. SCOTT

On the day after the Armistice, Mr Lloyd George had spoken to his followers of the necessity, in making peace, of putting away 'base, sordid, squalid ideas of vengeance and of avarice'. Scott, encouraged by this language, hoped at first that Mr Lloyd George would conduct the election in this temper. On November 30th he wrote that we might trust the right feeling and the judgment of the Prime Minister for the interpretation of justice in the making of the Peace. This false confidence was soon dispelled. On December 3rd, Scott wrote, 'All the real ardour of the Coalition goes into execration of the enemy'; and on December 11th: 'We venture to say that in no election within living memory have the issues—the really effective issues on which stress is laid and by the aid of which it is hoped that votes may be won—been so paltry, or the mode of their presentation been so reckless and vulgar.'<sup>1</sup>

Next day he wrote:

He (Mr Lloyd George) needs some wholesome restraint also on the subject of war indemnities. He made great

<sup>1</sup> On the same day an official statement was published giving Mr Lloyd George's programme in five points:

- (1) Punish the Kaiser.
- (2) Make Germany pay.
- (3) Get the soldier home as quickly as possible.
- (4) Fair treatment for the returned soldier and sailor.
- (5) Better housing and better social conditions.



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show of honest independence and refusal to curry favour with the electors by assuring them that they could not really expect to extract from Germany the whole of the twenty-four thousand millions at which he estimates the cost of the war to the Allies—excluding, no doubt, Russia, who no longer counts. He is quite right, since this sum would undoubtedly exceed the value of the whole capitalised wealth of Germany, would indeed exceed it, according to the Treasury estimate, by something like fifty per cent. Why then does he go on at once to say that ‘we propose to demand the whole cost of the war from Germany’? We cannot claim more in proportion than our allies, and if we are to get the whole cost they must get the whole cost. This is not a serious way of approaching a question of fundamental importance to the future of Europe and to the principles on which civilised States are to be encouraged to act. It is, indeed, precisely the way in which we should expect Germany to act were she victorious. Assuredly she would exact the last halfpenny of our money, the last drop of our sweat and of our blood. That is just what Mr George says he will have. We seem to hear the very voice of the Kaiser in the echoes of his cry. Apparently he thinks this popular. We do not think it is. Often people will cheer a thing to the echo, and when they come to think it over, recognise that they were misled and fooled. The people do at bottom love the statesman, not the cheap-jack. Sometimes Mr George shows the lineaments of the one, sometimes of the other. We could wish the temptations of electioneering were not so strong upon him. Luckily they will soon be over, or there is no saying what we might not come to.

Scott’s habit of treating every person as guided ultimately by reason, which gave their special character and force to his leading articles, led him sometimes, as in this case, to underestimate the power and danger of mass delusion.

When President Wilson came to England, Scott had two conversations with him, and in the first he discussed the effect of the Election, in a curiously sanguine strain.

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*Private Papers: Dec. 29/18*

He asked what bearing I thought the result of the elections might have on foreign policy. I said I thought very little. The greatness of the majority was no real strength to the Government, perhaps the reverse. He said Yes; when he saw Ll. G. and Balfour before leaving London they were overwhelmed at what had happened and could not get their bearings. I said the matter was really in the hands of the Government and they could do pretty much what they liked. He said he found them very favourable to his policy. The difficulty was with France and Italy—particularly with Italy. In his conversations with the Italian representatives (Sonnino and Orlando) he had found them obsessed with the idea of the Eastern Adriatic. They could talk about nothing else, and whatever he said, they always came back to it.

I said Ll. G. need not have descended so low in his electoral appeals in order to get his majority, that the line he had taken was not really consistent with any atmosphere in which a League of Nations could be created. He assented. I spoke of G.'s inconsequence as a reassuring feature in this connection. As Morley had remarked of him, he could not understand a principle; he acted on feeling, impulse, vision, and his policy was not a consistent whole. I begged W. not to regard the result of the election as a demonstration against the policy of a League of Nations. It was nothing of the sort; the League of Nations was not in question. It was due to a great wave of emotion thrown up by the war, and was at bottom an expression of pure anti-Germanism inflamed by Ll. G.'s appeals. . . . He agreed, and said this was strictly analogous to what had happened in the recent Congressional elections in America. They were in no degree a demonstration against his policy, and there was nothing concerted about them, but every man among his supporters against whom a charge could be brought of slackness in the war or pro-German sympathies was promptly fired. I begged him to believe that all the better and deeper feeling of the nation was on his side, and only needed to be appealed to. He said

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he was very glad to hear that. In point of fact it was his intention, if in the course of the Peace negotiations he found himself met by obstacles to his policy which he could not overcome, then to make a public statement, he hoped in the politest terms but still perfectly clear and frank, as to the position, and to challenge the public opinion of the world.

I said I had good hopes of Ll. G., that he responded very greatly to his surroundings and could, I believed, be greatly influenced by him, but he was extremely elusive and in dealing with him you had to keep an extremely bright look-out. He replied, with a twinkle, that though he liked G. very much, he was quite conscious of that.

I remarked that any little influence I might myself have had with him was probably now at an end, since of late we had been steadily attacking him. He said he had noticed that, but that when G. had spoken of me to him recently he had done so in the most friendly terms and appeared to bear no malice.

There is a certain advantage in being the kind of man of whom other people can never be certain whether, when the test comes, you will be much worse than your fellows, or much better. This comes out in Scott's interview with Wilson. If a man is unaccountable you need never despair of him. But in this case Scott's optimism led him to look far too lightly on certain consequences of the election which even so dexterous a magician as Mr Lloyd George could not undo.

To understand the mistake into which Scott was led by his faith in Mr Lloyd George's resilient qualities, we must glance at the conditions under which the Peace Conference met at Paris. Comparisons are often drawn between the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Vienna. At Vienna there was a strong steadying force to restrain the ambitions, the revenge, and the cupidity, of the victors. This was the fear of the return of Napoleon, or the rise of a successor. Of the Ministers who deliberated at Vienna, the most important were less anxious to punish France for

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disturbing the peace of Europe, than to give the restored Bourbon House a fair chance of keeping its throne. The guiding principle of the Peace was the protection of legitimist authority in France and over Europe. Both in its virtues and its vices, in its kind face to France and its hard face to Liberalism, the Peace reflected this dominant motive.

In 1918 Wilson had given the world a strong steadying principle to restrain the ambitions, the revenge, and the cupidity, of the victors. This principle might be described as the setting up of a new discipline to be observed alike by the conquerors and the conquered. Some of the main ideas that were to inspire this new international life had been proclaimed and urged by Liberal leaders—notably by Asquith, long before Wilson came into the war—among them the idea of redrawing the map of Europe in order to satisfy thwarted national sentiment, and the idea of a League of Nations. Wilson had carried these ideas further, putting them into a system, and added others, notably his demand for the freedom of the seas and his ban on annexation. Germany was to come into this scheme if she threw over her bad rulers. For he proposed to distinguish between a democratic Germany and a militarist Germany, as the Allies in 1814 had distinguished between a Bourbon France and a Bonapartist France. America was not fighting to punish the German people, but to overthrow a tyranny of which Germany was as much the victim as Europe.

Supposing that every politician and official engaged in making the Peace had been thinking of one thing only, how to rescue the world from its misery and danger and to put it on a stable basis, it would not have been an easy thing to carry out Wilson's principle. The races and peoples of Europe had been distributed and combined by forces that had little respect for the doctrine of nationality. To redraw that map in such a way as to give absolute and precise effect to that doctrine would be impossible, even if the whole world desired it. At Buckingham Palace in July 1914, when political passions were sobered by the shadow of an approaching catastrophe, the complexities of two Irish counties, Tyrone and Fermanagh, had defeated all the efforts to make peace

in Ireland. Europe was full of Tyrones and Fermanaghs. Wherever you drew the line you put some people on the wrong side. In each case you had to choose whom you would leave in the cold. Wilson's principle, then, could only give you rough justice: much more justice (a truth often forgotten to-day) than was to be found in the map of 1914, but still less justice than Wilson had thought he was about to dispense to a world whose arrangements were, unfortunately, less simple than he supposed.

If nature and history had created this difficulty, the Allies, clutching at any means of victory, had created another, for in the course of the war England and France had made treaties promising Italy and Japan more than the Wilson principles would give them. Jusserand, the French Ambassador in Washington, had advised Wilson to say definitely that he meant to disregard these treaties, and his refusal of this advice is perhaps the first of Wilson's series of disastrous mistakes. One thing had happened to ease the Italian problem: after the disaster of Caporetto, the Italians had met the Yugo-Slavs, and agreed with them on a new arrangement which was to supersede the secret treaties. This fact might have been turned to effective account by a man better able than Wilson to manage his surroundings. In the end it counted for nothing, for Sonnino was allowed to repudiate it.

There was another difficulty in comparison with which these difficulties were child's play. The world was in wild disorder with revolution over a great part of Europe, famine over a greater. Four years of war in the twentieth century had created more confusion than twenty years of war in the nineteenth. Every one of the questions that now forced themselves on the makers of the Peace needed for its solution not merely the guidance of common sense, but the nobler light of generosity. Wilson, sitting in his study, might think of himself as a new Bentham, drawing new boundaries on the map of Europe and creating a new international institution with covenants, articles, and formulas. But what of the Europe that was to receive these gifts? It was not a group of peoples living a normal life calmly awaiting the wisdom of its new leaders. It was more like a society on the

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brink of dissolution, reduced by famine and peril to primitive instincts and primitive methods. To all the passions left by four years of heartless war there was added this new fury of despair, and it looked as if Wilson's League would find, when it came to life, that it was ruling not over a family of nations but over a cockpit of maddened tribes fighting for food. If, then, a great disaster was to be avoided, much more of the Wilson spirit was needed than Wilson himself supposed or supplied. The political rearrangement of Europe without any common effort for her economic restoration, would, indeed, add new dangers. To set up a number of new sovereign States, taking the old empires to pieces, without economic readjustments, would increase the strain under which Europe was breaking. Thus the world might die of too much Wilson if it did not get enough Wilson. If the men who were making the new Europe made no sacrifices themselves in order to give that Europe a firm foundation, its life would fall into confusion.

Few outside those who had been engaged in administrative tasks and the work of inter-allied bodies realised all that was involved in this: realised, that is, that the needs of the world demanded from every nation a peace of sacrifice. In the hour of victory peoples who had lived at the highest tension for four years for the sake of victory had to be ready to forgo what seemed to them to be the advantages they had gained by their patient endurance. This was so novel an idea that Seignobos, the French historian, said of it that it was beyond the daring of ministers and diplomatists, and that only the imagination of the peoples could rise to it.

The hope that such an effort might be made, that a Peace would follow that would enable a new Europe to live together with a growing habit of co-operation, putting its common needs before its separate ambitions, depended, as it happened, more on England than on any other European people. 'You and I know,' said Painlevé to an Englishman, holding in his hand a German illustrated paper with a picture of a devastated French district, 'you and I know, as educated men, that France can never recover from the war unless she forgives Germany, but that is too hard a truth to-day for the

people of France.' A hard truth for all war-worn and war-inflamed peoples, but perhaps a little less hard for the people whose country had never been overrun by hostile armies. England had much to forgive Germany, but Englishmen had not seen their country in German hands; they had not lived as close as Frenchmen or Italians to an enemy spreading devastation, suffering, and fear. There was more hope, then, in England than in France, for a leader who tried to bring about the revolution of which Seignobos spoke.

England, with less to inflame her passions than France or Belgium, happened to hold a key position in the autumn of 1918. The two Powers who could, between them, have saved the world from the catastrophe into which it fell headlong in the spring of 1919, were Great Britain and the United States. They were the two creditor Powers, able by their sacrifices to give confidence and stability to the new world. If Mr Lloyd George could have persuaded Wilson to forgive Europe her debts on the understanding that England would do the same herself and keep the Allies strictly to their promise on Indemnities, the evil that more than any other spread ruin over the Peace would have been averted. Whether that could have been done nobody can say, for America was distant, the people of America were naturally less aware than the peoples of Europe of the problems and difficulties of Europe, and Wilson's grasp of Wilson principles, and his power over America, both had narrower limits than England supposed. But one thing is certain. Mr Lloyd George could not hope to persuade Wilson to act on the principles implied in his whole scheme unless he accepted those principles himself, and unless he urged them on the British people.

Scott, as we have seen, believed that the British people would respond if they were asked to support Wilson. Whether he was right, whether Mr Lloyd George could have carried the English people with him if he had said boldly to the nation what Haig said boldly to the War Correspondents,<sup>1</sup> that the peace must be a peace of reconciliation, nobody can tell. Perhaps only Gladstone could have succeeded in such

<sup>1</sup> See H. W. Nevinston's *Last Changes, Last Chances*, p. 150.

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an effort, for it demanded a combination of qualities which he possessed, not to be found in any living statesman; Gladstone had a religious sense for the unity of civilisation and a conviction, justified by his career, that he could fire a people with his own passionate faith. Mr Lloyd George's friends believed, at first, that he meant to defy Northcliffe, and they knew that he could speak to England, by virtue of his gifts, his temperament, and his prestige, with a greater power than any other man in public life. It is probable that in this case, as in most, his first instinct was generous and wise. If Mr Lloyd George acts as he feels, he generally goes right; if he stops to think he often goes wrong. He might say with Sulla that he errs when he deliberates. He now began to look about him, and to consider his surroundings. War is the opportunity of the violent Press, and that Press was now in full blast demanding a peace of vengeance and avarice. Mr Lloyd George had seen its power grow steadily or unsteadily for four years, striking down men and reputations. He was resolved not to be its next victim, and he thought the way to disarm it was to steal its thunder. He thought, as many a man has thought when exposed to a like temptation, that as soon as he had power in his hands he would be able to use it as he wished, uninfluenced by the desires of those who had put it there or by the methods by which he had obtained it. With the self-confidence bred by two years of demoralising power he believed that he could be the servant of this dangerous force one day and its master the next.

The first step was fatally easy. Both in writing his leaders and in speaking to Wilson, Scott had under-estimated the passions on which Mr Lloyd George was to play. Scott had seen the Boer War followed by an act of justice to a beaten enemy that had surprised the world, and British armies led by Generals whom he remembered as hunted outlaws. But the Election of 1918 followed, without breathing space, hard on the close of a war which for its intensity and its spirit recalled the struggle of the Romans with Hannibal. Cicero, arguing that the Romans kept the passions of war under control in most of their quarrels, excepted that struggle, and contrasted their treatment of the Latin peoples and their



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treatment of Carthage.<sup>1</sup> The Great War was the only war of which any man living in 1918 could have said *toto certatum est corpore regni*. It is true that some men and women, looking back on those four years and thinking of the lost flower of Europe's youth, could already regard the war as a tragedy too solemn for the spirit of revenge. Scott, whose mind passed without effort from scenes of excitement to the larger spaces of the spirit, fancied that this impression was widespread at the time of the armistice. But that large historical view demanded a large historical atmosphere. In the atmosphere of 1918 the spirit of revenge could easily be confused with the spirit of justice. For the Germans were to their opponents, not merely an enemy whose aggression had destroyed the peace of Europe, but an enemy whose deliberate inhumanity had outraged its slowly developing sense of public law.

To understand the full effect of the invasion of Belgium on the imagination of the time we may throw back our minds to Canning's act of violence and injustice in 1807. Suspecting that Napoleon was going to force the Danish fleet into his service, Canning asked Denmark, a neutral, to put her fleet in our keeping, and on her refusal bombarded Copenhagen. His brutal action was widely blamed even in England, and a noble protest stands on the records of the House of Lords. Even so warlike a Whig as Grenville denounced the doctrine that war cancels all obligations. Dr Holland Rose is able to say that he was condemned by the conscience of that age as by our own.<sup>2</sup> When this happened we had been engaged for years in a life and death struggle with Napoleon, an enemy of few scruples, and Canning thought that he was anticipating a blow that Napoleon had concerted with the Tsar at Tilsit. If, acting under this temptation, he was censured by a large body of opinion, even in his own country, what would have been the impression made on his age if he had so acted at the very outbreak of war, if he had made a ruthless demand of a small neighbour before a shot had been fired, and on its

<sup>1</sup> *De Officiis*. Book I, 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, Vol. I, p. 364.

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refusal had fallen on that neighbour with all the rigours of a war of conquest? When the Germans marched into Belgium the Western world had been at peace for nearly half a century and it was still living in the ideas of peace. Without either of the excuses that Canning could plead, they committed a cold-blooded crime in order to steal an advantage over an enemy in the first hour of war. It is not surprising that from that moment Germany stood in the public mind for a ruthless realism, the ruthless realism that gave the war its savage character, taking the form, on one side, of poison gas, and the drowning of non-combatants, and on the other of a blockade more inexorable than the blockade Cobbett had called inhuman, when Napoleon was trying to lock every door in Europe against us.

An appeal to passion under such conditions could have only one result. But to understand all the mischief it could do we must remember another aspect of modern war. *Totum corpus* means much more to-day than valour, however heroic, and violence, however merciless, on land and sea. For one of the chief weapons of war is propaganda. 'If we cannot use a man's virtues,' said Junius in a famous phrase, 'let us use his vices.' Propaganda, like other methods of warfare, deteriorates in character as war progresses, using a man's virtues less, his vices more. For, as the strain increases, the sense for justice which makes men indignant has to be hardened into the spirit of revenge which makes them vindictive. Propaganda was carried to such perfection as the war proceeded that at last there was scarcely anything that one nation would not believe of another. The General Election which followed the Armistice was turned into a last effort of propaganda, directed not only against Germany, but against anybody who dared to talk sense or justice at home. Such speakers got a poor hearing. One of them was Grey, who, following in Lansdowne's steps, urged England to accept Wilson's demand for the freedom of the seas, at a time when England cared about nothing except the latest fantastic estimate of the German indemnity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, by this time, deluded by his optimism about the immediate success of the League of Nations, was already getting ready to surrender

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In this violent hour all Germany was confounded in one condemnation. Nobody had denounced the rulers of the old Germany more severely than Wilson, who, as a neutral, anxious above all else to remain neutral, had made every effort to find some common ground with that Government. 'This intolerable thing,' ran his famous message to Congress when his last effort had failed, 'of which the masters of Germany have shown us the ugly face, this menace of combined intrigue and force which we now see so clearly as the German power, a thing without conscience, or honour, or capacity for covenanted peace, must be crushed, and if it be not utterly brought to an end, at least shut out from the friendly intercourse of the nations.' But Wilson persisted in distinguishing between the rulers and the people of Germany, declaring that the German people were as much the victims of their rulers as Europe, and implying that one kind of peace would be given to a Germany still in the hands of this military despotism, and another to a Germany that had set herself free.

In December 1918, the Kaiser was an exile, and the German people had made the revolution that the Allies had professed to desire. But Wilson's distinction disappeared. All the anger excited by Wilson and others who had denounced the rulers of the old Germany was turned against the new. As for the sacrifices demanded by the peril of the world, all that is to be said is that when the elections were over most people believed not that England had to take a burden on her shoulders, but that she was about to become richer than ever.

The full significance of these events escaped Scott. He realised how much Mr Lloyd George's sensitive temperament is affected by the atmosphere in which his alert and rapid mind is working at the moment. He believed that taking him out of the Northcliffe zone and putting him into the Wilson zone would be like taking him from the close

that demand, so that the ex-Foreign Minister of the Power that had blocked that reform in the past was now a better friend to it than the Ruler of the Power that had pressed it. Subsequent history has shown that the later Lansdowne and the later Grey were wiser than the later Wilson.

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air of Fleet Street to the vigorous air of his Welsh mountains. He did not realise that the General Election had created a Northcliffe atmosphere from which Mr Lloyd George could not escape. Invited by the Government to demand a Northcliffe peace, the country had given Mr Lloyd George the largest and the worst majority that any Prime Minister ever found behind his back. Mr Lloyd George was the victim of this atmosphere in two senses. Partly he was afraid of this majority. The majority was not so much behind his back as on his back. There came a moment in the negotiations, when, realising the consequences of throwing too great a burden upon Germany, he tried to prepare the English people for concessions. The answer came in the famous telegram from the House of Commons holding him to his promises, and he found, like Hernani in Meredith's poem, that he had filched the prize, forgetting the horn of the old gentleman. But he was the victim of this atmosphere in another sense. More than once during the war his imagination had been fired by the vision of saving England by stubborn struggle, and then saving the world by a magnanimous peace. In the hour of victory this had been his first mood. But he had not come unscathed through the coarse violence of the election. In destroying his opponents he had destroyed something of himself. His generous dreams had gone. He went to Paris Wilson's man where England had nothing to take; Northcliffe's man where England had anything to give.

Now, too, the nation felt the full consequences of the proscription that had followed the fatal quarrel of December 1916. The Labour party which had kept its head and its self-respect during the election was unrepresented and the best Liberal and independent elements in the governing class were excluded from the Conference. That Balfour was a man who could think for himself nobody will doubt, but he had made a bad speech, to Mr Lloyd George's annoyance, demanding all the German colonies, before the Conference opened, and the part he played at Versailles was very different from the part that he played later at Washington. Lord Cecil was a great moral force, but outside the problems of the League of Nations, where, of course, he was

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invaluable, a neglected force. Mr Fisher, with his moderating historical sense, was left in London maturing his important schemes for education. The place of Asquith, Grey, Lansdowne, Haldane, and Bryce was not filled by General Smuts who, though he helped effectively in creating the League of Nations, encouraged instead of restraining British selfishness, for he was largely responsible for one of the worst blots on the Peace, the shameless inclusion of pensions and allowances in the bill to be charged against Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Conference met at Paris blind to the danger in which civilisation stood.

One of the few active politicians who realised at the time what was plain to all the officials who were engaged on relief work or constructive administrative work of one kind or another was Colonel House, who pressed his views for a large financial policy on Wilson without success.<sup>2</sup> House soon saw how badly things were going. Early in March he sent to Scott the following letter.

*Confidential* COMMISSIONER PLÉNIPOTENTIARY, OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, PARIS,  
March 10, 1919

DEAR MR SCOTT,

Thank you for your letter of March 4th and for the interesting information which you give.

I have long since given up hope of having the kind of peace the world desires. It is a question now of getting the best that we can, or of stopping the machinery and running the risk of chaos. The mischief was done at the elections in both the United States and England. The reactionary forces were strengthened in such a way as to place difficulties in our path at every turn of the road.

The so-called governing classes seem to me to be completely asleep, and it is nearly impossible to awaken them.

I shall appreciate your giving your views upon matters connected with the Conference.

Sincerely yours,  
E. M. HOUSE

<sup>1</sup> *What really happened at Paris*, edited by House and Seymour, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. IV, p. 396.

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Scott answered in a long letter.

*March 16, 1919*

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I am grateful to you for your letter. I recognise fully that no ideal settlement can be got. What I am concerned about is that the settlement should be sound so far as it goes. I make no fetish of the fourteen points, but two things seem to me vital—that no population forming an integral part of one State shall be transferred to another against its will, and that generally the new order shall not render friendly co-operation in the future between conqueror and conquered impossible. The ideal is here essentially also the practical. If justice is not done to Germany she will be as profoundly a troubler of the peace as France, so wronged, has been for forty years. She cannot co-operate sincerely in a League of Peace, she may quite justifiably refuse to enter it. The foundation of the Peace will be wrong and it will work out wrong. The whole edifice must crumble. It may seem a small matter, but I think the forcible transfer of the Saar Valley coalfield would involve these consequences. It would be the denial of the only principle on which a just peace can rest. So would the forcible separation, under whatever form, from Germany of the rest of the German territory west of the Rhine. So would the inclusion of Danzig in the Polish State, which amounts, in fact, to the dismemberment of Germany. So (though in a less degree) would be the denial to the Austro-Germans of the right to unite, if they so desire, with the rest of Germany. Therefore, it appears to me all these things should be resisted, and I am convinced (though, of course, you will know best about this), that they can be successfully resisted. France desires them, foolishly and suicidally desires them. They would, of course, make permanently impossible for her a reconciled Germany. She must, if these things are done, stand to arms as Germany since 1871 has stood to arms. Germany cannot be rendered permanently impotent. She will revive, and danger and dread will revive with her. George, as I said, was quite ready to make 'concessions'. These things are not concessions, they are surrender. George, be it never forgotten, is not a statesman; he is a pure opportunist with a good many

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sound and generous instincts, but an opportunist to the bone. If resolutely resisted he will give way. Why should he not? He has worked with the President hitherto. He will not break with him if he can help it. He wants to be nice to France, but at a pinch he will always throw over France for America. Her beautiful eyes are worth no real sacrifice. And France alone is powerless. The President, I am convinced, is master of the situation. And George, even if he wished to stand out, can find no backing here. The whole instinct of the people would be against him. Mere anti-Germanism is dying out. France can be consoled in other ways. She needs assistance in material things, and this might be forthcoming.

Pray forgive this too long letter which can only be excused by your kind invitation.

Scott's letter is significant. What he said was, of course, true and urgent, but the letter is interesting also for what it did not say. Scott had not in mind the large problem that was behind all these separate questions, the problem of the economic restoration of Europe, and his mistaken optimism about Mr Lloyd George's services at the Peace Conference, was based on this tendency to concentrate on the struggle over issues on which Mr Lloyd George was defending a good cause against Clemenceau. This optimism is illustrated by other letters, such as the letters he wrote to Hobhouse on January 27 and April 23, 1919.

Things are going pretty well there I think—George has evidently determined to throw in his lot with Wilson and the combination is formidable. Luckily G. is quite as ready to cast aside what is bad as what is good, and he has now left the General Election far behind him and is well on the way—with Wilson's aid—to pick up again some of his Liberal principles. He may yet emerge as a shining example of Progressive statesmanship. I thought the olive branch to the Bolsheviks must have been of Wilson's suggestion, but Smuts wrote to tell me it was all Ll. G.'s own, and that he was quite hurt at being denied the credit.

We shall get an incomparably better peace than if Wilson

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hadn't been there and George hadn't backed him. I am in hopes there will be no flagrant departure from the Wilson principles as regards France. The real trouble evidently is in regard to Italy.

In another letter to a friend on April 5th, he wrote with enthusiasm of Mr Lloyd George's stand against Wilson on the question of Poland.

How well Lloyd George seems to have shown up in this business. Imagination, courage—what are they not worth in a tight place. He seems to have found himself in the singular position of defending Wilsonian principles against Wilson. By slow degrees and against great obstacles I believe a substantially just peace is emerging. What troubles me more now is the crime of the blockade. There seems to be no limit to French vindictiveness and commercial jealousy. Wilson ought never to have stood it, but though he can be firm in resistance ('obstinate' as he says of himself), I'm afraid he is not equally strong in action and initiative, and that he is better in stating a principle than in forcing its application. George is worth two of him there.

Thus to the last Scott continued to think that Mr Lloyd George was making a good or tolerable peace, and it was only by degrees after the Peace terms were made known that he realised what desperate mischief had been done. Yet, if we compare the terms of peace with the two letters that he had written to Hobhouse at the time of the Armistice, we can see what violence they did to the principles he had in mind before the peace-making began.

Scott's error is not difficult to understand. He was following the history of the Conference from crisis to crisis, and each crisis was in itself at the moment all-absorbing and all-important. It mattered a great deal whether Germany was fed or not, how Russia was treated, whether the mandate principle was applied without exception, whether the Saar valley was annexed or put under a special administration, where and how the new frontiers were drawn. Mr Lloyd George did valuable service in these conflicts.



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Making dramatic use of the noble protest sent by General Plumer from the occupied districts, he shamed the French out of their opposition to the feeding of Germany. On Russia he took a larger view than his colleagues, and proposed that the Conference should attempt to treat with the Soviet. On the question of mandates again he stood out firmly and successfully against the Dominion Premiers and General Smuts,<sup>1</sup> who wanted to take the German Colonies as property, leaving the mandate system to be confined to territories in which none of them were interested. On the new boundaries of Europe he had no English sentiment or English selfishness to consider, and he took a wiser view than Clemenceau, who was afraid of France in one sense and of Germany in another.

Scott's impression was that of most Englishmen at the time.<sup>2</sup> Concentrating their minds on one set of questions, they pictured the English Prime Minister as playing the part that Wellington and Castlereagh played at Vienna, moderating the rapacity or the severity of his Allies. The French had something to say on the other side. They pointed out that, with the German fleet at the bottom of the sea, the nightmare that had haunted every British Minister for twenty years was gone, whereas for the French the problem of security had received no such final solution. They observed that outside Europe a great deal of German territory and German property had left German hands and that the hands into which most of it had passed were British. 'Why are we supposed,' said a Frenchman, 'to be incorrigibly grasping because we ask for this or that on the Continent of Europe, whereas Great Britain may take a large slice of Africa and call on the world to admire her moderation?' There were moments when each Power, indignant over the behaviour of another, talked and blushed with Wilson.<sup>3</sup> In this way the Treaty

<sup>1</sup> *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. IV, pp. 296, 305, and 306.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Asquith; see *Letters from Lord Oxford to a Friend*, p. 92 (April 3, 1919).

<sup>3</sup> One of the most cynical of the minor transactions of the Conference was Curzon's attempt by pressure and management to obtain control over Persia. The *Temps* defended Persia, arguing in the Wilson spirit that Persia ought to sit at the Peace Conference and keep her independence.

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gained something, though the spirit of peace gained little. For the most part the Conference, even where it did the right thing, exhibited the want rather than the spirit of co-operation. 'What delays peace?' wrote the Paris correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* on March 29, 1919. 'If no wild speeches had been made about indemnities, if the Powers really considered the League of Nations an effective institution, if they meant what they said about their new principles, should we still be wondering what are the terms to be offered to an enemy who accepted the armistice last November on certain definite conditions? In a room in Paris three or four men are engaged in eager discussion. How many billions is it to be? What is my share? Who is to have the Saar Valley? Who Fiume? Who Mesopotamia? From time to time one or other of the group rises impatiently from the table. And outside that strange new force, the wild enthusiastic thing, as Burke said of another Revolution, takes another stride towards the West.'

A few weeks later, on April 12, the same correspondent wrote: 'If every German in the world were stripped naked, if every fragment of German property in the world were confiscated to-morrow, it would not save France and Italy from bankruptcy, and Britain and America from an industrial crisis in comparison with which the crisis that followed the wars with Napoleon would be a storm in a teacup. . . . If a few men like Hoover put the truth about Europe at this moment before a few English audiences, if they described the misery of millions of people who are as much responsible for the war as they are for the Flood, if they explained the causes and pictured the consequences, the whole nation would declare its determination to save Europe. As it is, men here who have travelled in these unhappy countries are breaking their hearts with sorrow and foreboding, while the nation at home seems like another planet as far distant as Mars, whence we catch echoes of election speeches, and the rhetoric of a dead age. England and America must put their credit behind the victims of the war. They must be ready to renounce debts. They must feed the countries where want and famine are raging, including Russia. They must release

the oil of Baku for Russian transport. They must lend money and provide raw materials, so that industry may revive. They must, in fact, accept the responsibility of their proud position in the world. For the whole world, in this sense, depends on the courage, the imagination, and the generosity of the two nations who alone can restore the basis of its life.'

Unfortunately, neither Wilson nor Mr Lloyd George was thinking of these problems. Wilson was wrestling with a conscience that had been surprised and taken aback by the complexities of the map of Europe. He felt himself a simple countryman in a group of cockney sharpers, and that is not an atmosphere in which a man grasps the larger meaning of the world about him.<sup>1</sup> Mr Lloyd George was thinking chiefly of the people whose extravagant hopes he had excited by promising to make Germany pay 'to the limit of her capacity'. He was thinking less about what the world would look like when these struggles were over than about what the Peace would look like when he took it home. Prisoner of the passions he had enlisted in his service, he had before him the House of Commons, just as Clemenceau had before him the Chamber of Deputies. No man had before him the spectre of the Black Death that was to re-visit Europe when his triumph had been won.

The truth about the Peace Conference can be put in a single sentence. During five months of conflict and argument, no Power made an effective sacrifice for the sake of a permanent peace or the restoration of Europe. The shadow of famine and revolution was thrown across Europe, but these statesmen, hardened in the atmosphere of war and suffering, scarcely noticed it in the struggles of their dialectics.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of Wilson's first acts was to withdraw the American representatives from Inter-Allied bodies like the Maritime Transport Council. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, Vol. II, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> This indifference struck all the officials at the time and those who came into contact with them. On April 22nd, the Paris correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote: 'The supreme problem of the hour remains unsolved, unattempted, virtually unrecognised, by the statesmen who are making elaborate plans on the assumption that their arrangements are to last beyond to-morrow. In this connection the chief blame falls on England and America, who have been very slow to appreciate the

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It will strike some minds as curious that a man with Mr Lloyd George's imagination and experience could have deluded himself into thinking that the world could escape the consequences of this Peace. The truth that he had spoken to the journalists in Paris about the indemnity did not cease to be the truth because Northcliffe did not allow him to act upon it. How, then, did he persuade himself that there was no curse on the Treaty? Surely if there were two Lloyd Georges at Paris, one talking like Wilson, the other smiling like the augurs, there were two Lloyd Georges in the House of Commons, one proud of his peace of vengeance and avarice, the other trembling while he boasted. The answer is to be found in the false confidence of his resilient temperament. He stands out, as he knew, among his contemporaries as a man who can accommodate and adjust, who can repair mistakes and correct errors, who can forget the past to save the future. Knowing this, he had delayed final decisions as often as he could. But he did not understand that he was giving to a precise and unbending formalist the power to obstruct all his efforts at mitigation and appeasement. The skill with which he could manage directors and trade unionists was defeated by the hard shell of Poincaré's pertinacity. He took to Genoa better qualifications than Wilson had taken to Paris, but he was beaten at Genoa as Wilson had been beaten at Paris, because he had delivered himself into Poincaré's unyielding hands. If Mr Keynes has described with bitter and dramatic force Mr Lloyd George working mischief at Paris, Sir Arthur Salter has described him with vivid sympathy straining all his energies in the vain effort to undo that mischief at Genoa and Rapallo.<sup>1</sup>

But Mr Lloyd George's confidence was not based only on his consciousness of his own gifts. It was based on a reading of the history of the war which made him over-estimate the power of recovery in the world. For this too sanguine

necessity for a bold and generous financial policy.'—*cf.* Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, p. 211. 'It is an extraordinary fact that the fundamental economic problem of a Europe starving and disintegrating before their eyes, was the one question on which it was impossible to arouse the interest of the Four.'

<sup>1</sup> *Recovery*, p. 136.

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view there seemed good ground. Before the war it had been supposed that civilisation could not survive more than a few months of a conflict in which the great Powers were engaged. During the war Great Britain had been able to take five millions of men out of industry, to support her own life, and to help a great part of the Continent to maintain a struggle exhausting its resources of men and things. Mr Lloyd George, close to this surprising achievement, and himself in a sense no unimportant part of it, quieted his conscience with the belief that with the help of the League of Nations even greater miracles might be expected. The creation of the League of Nations was an immense achievement, but neither Mr Lloyd George nor Scott appreciated the immense burden that was to be thrown upon the League by the selfishness of the Peace.

For what has been the history of Europe since? What is the meaning of the civil war that has raged so fiercely between Communist and Fascist? Why has parliamentary government gone down over most of Europe, almost without a murmur? The answer surely is that the economic distress and confusion of the world, disregarded by the peacemakers of Paris and aggravated by their dispositions almost beyond hope of repair, have created a struggle of such intensity and significance that all the legends of 1848 seem in comparison a mere set of skirmishes behind barricades thrown up at one moment and thrown down at another. The war left behind it a spirit of violence which displayed itself in all countries; England showed it in the Black and Tan outbreak; France in the Ruhr; America in the brutal persecution of freedom under the rule of Attorney General Palmer. In some countries violence was not merely a passing phenomenon; it became the basis of social life. Those were the countries on whom fell the brunt of the economic disorder in which the Peace Conference left the world. And if this class-war was provoked by the neglect of these problems by the Conference, the nemesis that followed its bad faith to Germany has been equally plain and grave. Bad faith is not too strong a term to use when Wilson's contrast between militarist Germany and a reformed Germany is remembered. For at

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Paris republican Germany was treated as if the Kaiser was still in power. It is difficult to point to a word in the Treaty which was softer than it would have been if the Peace had been dictated to the Kaiser himself. By the terms of the Treaty, and by the brutal insolence that marked the actual ceremony at Versailles, the German people, with whom Wilson had stated in the most solemn manner that the Allies had no lasting quarrel, was made to pass through the Caudine Forks.

One significant fact may be noted about Scott's treatment of the Peace Conference. Scott did in this case what he only did once in his life. As a rule the past was buried in his mind and he never went back to old mistakes or old disappointments. Writing to Hobhouse about one of his articles, on January 27, 1920, a year after the Peace, he said: 'I was so glad you fired off that last shot at Ll. G. and his betrayal of the League of Nations. I had the same sort of feeling of desperate regret and disillusion when I read his reply to Asquith, as when I first realised that the whole policy of the Fourteen Points had been utterly abandoned with the connivance of its author.'

## CHAPTER XV

### IRELAND—THE LAST PHASE

IF Scott had been slow to realize the full catastrophe of the Peace Conference, he saw from the first the fatal consequences of the Government's Irish policy. On December 30, 1918, he wrote in the paper:

The constitutional party in Ireland is dead; more than any man, Mr Lloyd George has helped to kill it. Now he is faced by a dire problem. By the ordinary law Ireland is now ungovernable, and, unless by some supreme act of statesmanship aid be forthcoming, she is like to remain permanently and increasingly ungovernable. But from Mr George, it is to be feared, we can look for no such act. Nothing in his recent career suggests the remotest hope of it. What then?

Scott could hardly foresee the terrible answer to his question.

After the General Election of 1918, Sinn Fein, copying the Ulster example, set up a Government in Ireland and demanded self-determination. The shadow of the war had gone, and it was widely believed in Ireland that either of her own will or from pressure of outside opinion, England would treat with Ireland as one nation with another. In Ireland itself there was nothing to justify this optimism, for coercion had never been carried to such lengths. When the Peace delegates met at Paris, men, women, and children were in prison in Ireland for singing songs, playing a patriotic tune on a pipe, and for other offences that had been punished in the old days in Poland or Hungary, or the Turkish Empire, but scarcely anywhere else in Europe. Coercion had often been directed in the past against land-leaguers or moon-lighters, in the interest of property or order, but it was now directed against Irishmen whose only crime was that they thought about

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Ireland as Englishmen thought about England. It was as dangerous to be an Irish Member of Parliament or an Irish County Councillor under British rule as it had been to be a Croat Member of Parliament under the rule of the Magyars.

This coercion produced little violence until after the Peace, for down to that time Irishmen thought that when Peace came it would bring them some of the advantages promised to others in the name of self-determination. They sent envoys to Paris supposing that it would be no more trouble to Wilson, while he was about it, to make a nation out of Irishmen than to make nations out of Czechs and Poles. But the Conference kept its doors shut, and the British Government refused to recognise that Irish sentiment would no longer be satisfied by concessions that would have brought peace if they had been made ten years earlier. With the collapse of all the hopes she had based on Peace, Ireland passed into a state of savage revolt. In eighteen months nearly a hundred constables were murdered. On the other side, as Ireland became 'permanently and increasingly ungovernable', the Government, in Bacon's phrase, 'put the law out of office', answering Balkan methods of insurrection by Balkan methods of justice. Factories and houses were burnt, and murder was met by murder, first in the dark and then in the daylight. When women and children fled from their homes in terror to sleep on the mountains, it was seen that this method of keeping order had brought our name to greater disgrace than it had ever suffered in the days of the Whiteboys or the worse days of '98. England rose in revolt, holding that anything was better than another hour of this infamy, and the end came.<sup>1</sup>

As these methods went from bad to worse, Scott went into fiercer and fiercer opposition to Mr Lloyd George and his Government. His letters to Dillon disclose his mind better perhaps than any others.

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, which had been the most inexorable opponent of concessions to Ireland in Gladstone's day, took an important part in this conversion. See the grateful letter from Morley to Mr Wickham Steed, then editor.—*Through Thirty Years*, Vol. II, p. 361.



## C. P. SCOTT

*August 2, 1919*

. . . I don't wonder you see small present hope for Ireland. George will, I fear, risk nothing for her, and nothing can be done without risk—desperate risk, as even Gladstone found, and things are far worse now than in his day. Nevertheless, necessity may drive where principle fails, and it is, I believe, frankly impossible to continue for any long space of time and when the general peace has returned, to govern Ireland as she is now being governed. Moreover, the fact of the existence of the Home Rule Act will compel action of some sort, so that a policy of mere delay seems, for that reason also, impracticable. As to George himself, his future will, I believe, be determined not by himself but by circumstances to which he adjusts himself with infinite resource and skill. . . . Success has not been good for him. Is he capable of renunciation? It is perhaps too late. We may have to count him among our war losses. Why has he failed so utterly in Ireland? I suppose because Ireland can't be manœuvred. But then neither can she be forced as he fancied. So he has committed every mistake in turn. I don't wonder you take a black view of the situation. What gives one hope is that our people are better than their rulers, and that hatred, if it is really to flourish, has got to be mutual. There is no hatred of Ireland here—only stupid misunderstanding and indifference bred of failure and fatigue—at bottom lots of goodwill which any decent politician could appeal to. I had a call the other day from poor Mrs S.<sup>1</sup> She seemed to embody all of which you speak. There was madness in her eye, in spite of self-restraint and much civility. And to think that we should have come to this after Gladstone's splendid effort and the long toil of wise and moderate Irishmen. . . .

In the following year the Government removed the Home Rule Act from the Statute Book, and passed through Parliament a Bill setting up two Parliaments, one for six counties in Ulster, the other for the twenty-six counties of the rest of Ireland. The Bill was received with derision

<sup>1</sup> A Sinn Féiner who had been the victim of a terrible injustice.

## IRELAND—THE LAST PHASE

by Nationalist Ireland. The separation between North and South was made definite. It was one thing to leave Ulster counties outside a Home Rule Bill by the methods discussed at the Buckingham Palace Conference; it was another to set up a Parliament in Ulster and so give strength and permanence to partition. This arrangement seemed to Irishmen, suspicious by nature and still more suspicious by experience, not, as it seemed to its author, a way out of a difficulty, but a deliberate blow at Irish unity. But apart from the mischief that they found in the Bill, Irishmen were no longer content to take a Bill prepared in England. They were living in a world in which one small submerged nation after another had come to the surface. Plans that had seemed suitable and adequate before the awakening of all this new life in Europe seemed now an insult to Irish honour. Ireland wanted not a Bill but a Treaty.

Scott took the same view of the Bill as Dillon and other Irish critics.

*May 30, 1920*

It was a great pleasure to hear from you, and I have often wished I could have a talk with you. As you say, the present Bill has no relation to the needs of the situation. Its real objects so far as I can make out are, first to get rid of the Home Rule Act, and secondly to entrench the six counties against Nationalist Ireland. Its effect, one fears, will be not to make a solution easier but to make it harder, by creating a fresh and powerful obstacle.

Why not take Carson at his word and simply leave the six counties as part of the United Kingdom and establish one Parliament for the rest of Ireland? That would come pretty near to the solution agreed on in 1916, and which Asquith recklessly threw over. The six counties would not for ever stay out, it would be found too inconvenient, and when they came in it would be on their own terms—that is, on terms agreed upon with the Irish Parliament by Irishmen with Irishmen. Terms have got to be made. The south cannot conquer the north or rule a part of Ireland as itself has been ruled. It must therefore pay a price

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for unity, and even Sinn Fein would surely discover that. Part of the price would, no doubt, be the frank acceptance of quasi-Dominion status. I wish I knew what you think about this. I do not think it quite impossible that the Bill should be modified in this sense. If not, it will have hereafter to be repealed which would be more troublesome and difficult.

After all, Parnell and Redmond knew what they were about, and the demand for separation, in so far as it is not simply a fighting weapon, does not seem in accord with the bottom facts of the situation.

Ever yours sincerely,

C. P. SCOTT

In the summer of 1920 when it looked as if Mr Lloyd George meditated turning the Coalition into a permanent party, Scott wrote a long leader on the prospect, ending with a stern warning to his friend (June 12, 1920):

The whole business of Coalition rests on the person and the prestige of the Prime Minister, but what prospect does Coalition, as a policy intended to last, hold out to him? His power, if he is to remain a Liberal, depends on the continued power and vitality of Liberalism. . . . How can Liberalism that is of any value ally itself permanently, let alone 'fuse' itself, with elements of thought, tradition, and interest so deeply opposed to its own, and live? It is possible to divide the Liberal party for a time and thereby gravely to injure it. It is possible by thus weakening it to drive some of its more active elements out of the party and into the ranks of Labour. It is possible to draw some of its more conservative elements into direct association, or fusion, with the Conservative party. It is not possible to do any of these things without striking at its life. Neither is it possible for the Prime Minister, or anybody else, to do these things and yet retain for himself a Liberal following of the slightest value or permanence. It is a road to ruin, and, though the full consequences may be delayed, they are there sure enough and will involve personal consequences ultimately as disastrous as the political.

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Dillon referred to this leader in a letter written a few days later.

*Confidential*

2 NORTH GT. GEORGE'S STREET,  
DUBLIN, June 15, 1920

MY DEAR SCOTT,

I read the leader in the *Manchester Guardian* of Saturday, June 12, with great satisfaction. The *Manchester Guardian* is at last realising the true meaning of Lloyd George's attitude towards the Liberal Party, and the *necessary* effect of the maintenance of the Coalition. Lloyd George has all along been playing a pretty deep and desperate game. He long ago came to the conclusion that *all* the old Party lines of division had been obliterated by the War. And having all along been a man free from the trammels of any *fixed* beliefs or principles, he proceeded to adapt himself to what he concluded to be the needs of the new time. He is now working on the theory that a fight *à l'outrance* between the 'Haves' and the 'Have nots' will dominate British politics for some years, and he has decided to lead 'the Haves', forcing them to shake off to some extent their Toryism, by making it plain to them that they dare not face the country without him. . . . It is a big programme and may, to the immense misfortune of England, succeed. If some *very* different leader does not emerge to take hold of the Labour party, Lloyd George will split the Labour Party as effectually as he *has* split the Liberal Party. The present Labour leaders will be repudiated by their young men and their Bolsheviki. And the Liberal Party, unless they get wholly different leadership will dwindle away. Then George might succeed in coming to the next election as the sole possible champion of private property, individual enterprise, Liberty, and Democratic Parliamentary Government, against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—the most revolting form of tyranny yet known to mankind—far worse in my judgment than either Kaiser or Tsar.

As for Ireland—what is the use of writing about it? The situation grows rapidly worse from day to day. And the Government do all that human ingenuity or human

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stupidity can suggest to accelerate the pace to utter chaos and ruin. . . .

You ask an amazing question—"Why not take Carson at his word?" *Who* is to take Carson at his word? Even if *we* were disposed to do so—and we most distinctly are not—we could not deliver the goods. . . . Moreover you are wrong about the Settlement of 1916. It was *very*—fundamentally—different from that suggested in your letter. And you are unjust to Asquith. Of the two, Lloyd George was distinctly more to blame than Asquith in that shameful transaction. Banish from your mind all ideas of '*modifying*' the present Home Rule Bill. The Irish situation has reached a stage now, in which there is not the slightest hope of any beneficial effect except from heroic measures.

June 29, 1920

MY DEAR DILLON,

. . . Like you, I hope nothing from the Bill, but I fear a good deal. The question 'Why not take Carson at his word?' was not addressed to any Irish party but to Ll. G., who cannot, or will not, move hand or foot in Ireland without Carson's permission, but has here his permission to drop the Northern Parliament and simply leave the six counties out of the Bill. That, I think, would make the Bill a good deal less dangerous. The settlement would be obviously provisional, and Ulster extremism would be a good deal less firmly entrenched. Of course the exclusion in 1916 was to have been purely provisional, but so in effect would this be. It could not last, and no vested interest would have been created for its continuance. I am rather surprised that you should place the chief blame for the 1916 betrayal on Ll. G. Of course he was to blame because, like Asquith, he had promised to resign rather than not put the settlement through. But after all Asquith was Prime Minister, and it was he who yielded to the threats of certain (not very important) members of his Government and by his weakness let a unique opportunity slip. You, however, know the details of the transaction as I do not, and it may be that Ll. G., who was the chief

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negotiator for the Government, may have jockeyed you and thus be in effect responsible for the breakdown. Some day perhaps you will tell me about it.

In a letter a few months later Scott came near to despair.

MY DEAR DILLON,

January 20, 1921

Many thanks for your letter. The situation, as you describe it, is black enough, and personally I don't see any more hope at present than you do. I had thought that George, having made Ulster interests quite safe, might have seen his way to concede at least fiscal autonomy to Southern Ireland. But my information is that he is prepared to make no concessions whatever till Southern Ireland has adopted and worked the Act and that then 'You shall see what you shall see.' This makes absolute nonsense of his repeated statements that he would grant what is virtually Dominion Home Rule, if he could be sure he was negotiating with some authority which could really answer, on its side, for Nationalist Ireland. But as you say, words in George's mouth mean no more than the convenience of the moment. . . . I have never regarded him as a good man struggling with adversity, but I certainly thought he really wanted to settle the Irish question, and I credited him with a little more insight into the way that could possibly be done than he has shown. I am pretty sure that his mentality has changed and that he believes far more in the efficacy of mere force than he did before the war and before he himself exercised power. The war has made him as it has made other of our misfortunes. . . .

In his comments in his paper he did not spare his friend, for he fastened on him the full responsibility as the most powerful man in his government.

On October 11th, 1920, Scott wrote in the *Manchester Guardian*:

Something is happening in Ireland which is new in our history—unexampled, at least, for more than a hundred

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years—but the Ireland of to-day is not the Ireland of 1798, and the listening world is not the same world. What was tolerated then in the way of lawless violence by the forces of the Crown, though even then not without strong protest from responsible British statesmen, will not be tolerated now. It is not for nothing that we have seen and reprobated German methods of frightfulness to terrorise a helpless enemy. We are not going to emulate them in our dealings with even the most rebellious of our fellow-countrymen. Nor are we going to accept this as the last word of statesmanship in dealing with by far the most important and urgent of our internal problems, a problem exceeding in importance and urgency any question of foreign policy whatever. Englishmen are at bottom resolved to do justice to Ireland. Still more are they resolved in the process to keep their hands decently clean and their reputation in the world unsullied. That is where Mr George is failing us.

In another article he declared that the only parallel to the Government's behaviour in Ireland was the old Russian Government's complicity in the Pogroms of the Black Hundreds. In a third he compared Mr Lloyd George's treatment of Ireland to the German treatment of Belgium.

Day after day Scott returned to the subject, and nobody who follows the history of that time will doubt that the blows Mr Lloyd George received from his friend were the hardest that he had to bear.<sup>1</sup> Scott put into these articles all the power that his self-control gave to his indignation, and if the Government was gradually borne down by the pressure of moral opinion, Scott's pen was one of the chief forces in putting an end to the terror of the Black and Tans.

For some time all personal relations between the two men ceased, but Mr Lloyd George sent a message to Scott's Jubilee Banquet and Scott wrote a letter in reply.

Mr Lloyd George's message was as follows:

<sup>1</sup> This was Asquith's view. See his letter of June 16, 1921, in *Letters from Lord Oxford to a Friend*, p. 188.

## IRELAND—THE LAST PHASE

May 3, 1921

Pray accept my warmest felicitations. The centenary of the *Manchester Guardian* and your own jubilee as its editor represent a period of unexampled progress in British journalism. Your personal record is an honour to your great profession. You have maintained its noblest traditions in the great paper associated with your name, and it is highly fitting that public men representing every shade of public opinion should join in congratulating you on the splendid attainments of the past, while at the same time wishing you and the paper a career of equal brilliance and success in the future.

Scott wrote in answer:

May 4, 1921

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Your kind and welcome message, by some bungling of the hotel people has only reached me to-day and can therefore only appear in to-morrow's *Manchester Guardian*. I am sorry for that because I should have liked the meeting to hear it, and, among all those friendly voices, it seemed in a way unnatural, after all these years to miss yours.

I wish events had not so utterly divided us. Your Irish policy breaks my heart, and what makes the thing worse is that I have the feeling that it isn't the real you that is finding expression either there or in the European policy, but that circumstances have laid a heavy hand on you. Forgive me for speaking so. I could not do it if I had not loved and admired you.

Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

One passage in this letter will strike the reader as curious. Most people, shocked by a friend's conduct, would prefer to think of that friend that he was not himself, but Scott held that you could not say of a man anything worse than that he had yielded to circumstances: what he asked of a man was that he should be his own master.

Inconsequence, as Scott put it, was a leading element in



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Mr Lloyd George's nature. This inconsequence had often produced disaster. But this inconsequence kept Scott from despair. A man so erratic, so wilful, so impulsive, might turn as suddenly from vice to virtue as from virtue to vice. So in this case. When the Irish negotiations began in the summer of 1921 Scott encouraged himself by these reflections. On July 16th he wrote:

Mr Lloyd George is a wonderful man—wonderful in his power of action and in his power of oblivion. . . . In order to do justice to Mr Lloyd George it is necessary to treat him as he treats himself ; that is entirely to forget the past, to meet each situation as it arises as though it were a new thing, and to forget all that has been said and all that has been done before it. The result is at times disconcerting, but the attitude has its advantages. Consistency is sometimes a virtue, sometimes it is the opposite. No one can accuse the Prime Minister of paying it undue respect. It is as easy for him to turn his back upon himself as upon his record. If you cannot always trust him to persevere in well-doing, neither is there ever cause to despair of his willingness and capacity to redeem an error. He has an ardour of imagination which enables him to see every situation as he wishes to see it, and he finds it easy to carry others with him because he is able first so wholeheartedly to carry himself. It is a great gift. It has led him at times into horrible lapses. At the moment it looks as though it might go far to redeem them.

Mr Lloyd George's power of oblivion was now to surpass all its previous triumphs. A few weeks earlier, when Asquith had demanded Dominion Home Rule, he had denounced the suggestion as 'lunacy', he had pictured Ireland as sowing the sea with mines, and declared, 'We are not going to quail before a combination of a handful of assassins'. In a few months he was preparing to negotiate with the assassins, and promising them more than Dominion Home Rule. Some saw in this new evidence of his instability further reason for mistrusting him, but Scott

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thought only of the good account to which this instability could be turned.

But even when hoping for a reformed Mr Lloyd George, Scott did not let his Government off lightly. An unhappy speech by Mr McCurdy produced from his pen (November 29, 1921) a picture of the misdeeds of the Coalition which may be cited as showing that if Scott's chief gift was for persuasive argument, he could be severe enough when severity was needed.

And here, of course, comes in the real difficulty. The tree is to be judged by its fruits, and the Coalition tree has borne very mixed fruits. It has borne the hideous waste and political folly of the two years of Mr Churchill's insensate war on Russia. It has borne the desolating fruit of a bad peace which has left Europe in deep distress and confusion. It has borne the needless failure to disarm the Turk and come to a frank and reasonable settlement with him which would have left him secure and unharried in his own territory and have saved the wretched subject population of Armenia and the rest of Asia Minor from his fangs. It has inflicted indelible disgrace on the British name by its policy of unpunished outrage and murder committed by the agents of the Government in Ireland. All this it has done, and it has struck at the same time heavy blows at the reviving trade of the country by an economic policy so absurd and wanton that hardly a business man, no matter what his party, can be found to defend it. And what have Mr McCurdy and his party done to check these things? When has their voice even been raised in courageous protest? There have been things on the other side. The Terror in Ireland has been abandoned and will not be revived, and a courageous effort is being made to settle the whole deadly Irish question. In Europe Mr Lloyd George has for a long time been struggling, unfortunately with but small success, to undo his own handiwork. But on the balance what credentials can Mr McCurdy display which should entitle him to pose as the pioneer of the Liberalism of the future, and his party as its chief

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hope? We are quite ready to hope, but we are constrained also to tremble.

The Irish negotiations which began in the summer of 1921 dragged on through the autumn, and more than once they were on the verge of collapse. Two well-known American journalists, the editor and the manager of the *Sun*, called upon Scott in Manchester in September, and one of them, Mr Patterson, made a note at the time of their discussion.

"The Firs" is situated in a residential section of Manchester and not in the suburbs as its name had suggested to us. A low, long house, with about an acre of ground around it and some very beautiful old evergreens, not pretentious but quite elegant. We were shown into a library or living-room, neat, orderly, the furniture covered with a bright cretonne, a mediocre fireplace, on the walls a reproduction of Botticelli's *Spring*, and various prints and some photos; book case with handsomely bound books, including a set of Renan—conventional, not distinctive, and evidently not a workshop. Scott came in and greeted us cordially. A smallish man, grey beard and hair, great vitality for a man of his age. My first impression was a disappointing one. He looked like X.Y.Z. Then I noticed that he had a pair of amazingly keen eyes, and when he had talked a few moments the X.Y.Z. effect vanished. He has a hearty laugh, which he used frequently, a simple but precise way of speaking, and an effect of large intellectuality combined with complete sincerity.

I began by saying that he must have had a busy time at the office last night. (It was the day when one of De Valera's communications to Lloyd George was made public.) When I called the night before, his secretary, thinking that I was asking to talk with Scott personally, said, in a tone of horrified remonstrance, 'But he's writing,' and I knew that Scott writing was not more to be interrupted than the Bishop of London at prayers.

'Yes,' said Scott, 'we go to press at an absurd hour on

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Sundays, 9.30. De Valera's letter did not begin to come in until 7.0, and consequently I was pretty busy. . . . De Valera, in saying that the government's offer will leave military, naval, and economic control in the hands of the British, is not right so far as economic control is concerned, except for the one matter of Lloyd George's insistence upon free trade between the islands. But that was put in for bargaining purposes. Lloyd George will have to concede the point, if pressed. Of course there ought to be free trade between the islands, but it should be arrived at by agreement between two independent nations.

'De Valera has never taken Ulster into consideration. He sticks in a narrow formalistic way to certain conclusions based upon his major premise that Ireland is an independent nation. He is logical enough, but logic gets you no where in a situation like this.' . . .

'If no agreement is reached,' I asked, 'will not that mean a return to the terror?'

'No,' said he emphatically, 'at least, I hope not. . . . If I had my way what I would do would be to withdraw British troops from every part of Ireland except one or two strategic points like Queenstown. I would withdraw them from Dublin. Then let Sinn Fein run things and settle her account with Ulster herself. Up to date she has never taken any real account of Ulster, she has tacitly assumed that Britain would take care of Ulster. She will find that she has a big job on her hands when she tries to come to terms with the North of Ireland.'

Fortunately, among the men engaged in Conference in London during the difficult negotiations of the autumn of 1921, there were five who realising what failure would mean for the reputation and even for the safety of Great Britain and Ireland, were prepared to risk their political careers to avert that disaster. The chief credit must go, of course, to Mr Lloyd George, but the task would have been beyond him if he had not received the invaluable help of Sir Austen Chamberlain and Lord Birkenhead on one side, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins on the

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other. Scott, almost the only man who held the confidence of both parties, was often able to smooth away difficulties and to dispel misunderstandings. In the last forty-eight hours he was constantly at Mr Lloyd George's side.<sup>1</sup>

He left an account of his final conversation with Mr Lloyd George.

*Private Papers: Monday, Dec. 5/21*

Ll. G. asked me to come to see him at five minutes to ten—an unusual and curiously exact hour. When I arrived he was closeted with Collins, and Davies told me he was due to meet the King at 10.10 before the King went down to Sandringham. At 10.10 Collins was still with him. As he came out of the Cabinet room he laid hold of me and pulled me in. He was excited and angry, said the Irish had gone back on everything—allegiance, naval securities, in fact all along the line. Agreement on these terms was impossible. . . . Then he hurried off to see the King. I told Davies I would come to lunch if George wanted me, and he did. T. Jones was there, and I stayed with him a little after Ll. G. had gone for his short sleep before the Irishmen came at three (they had appointed 2.30, but, as usual, put off) Jones was deeply discouraged. He said he agreed entirely with me on the Irish question. He had loathed the reprisals, and told Ll. G. what he thought of them, as I had. Ll. G. was now on his true line and deserved all possible support.

I was to have seen Ll. G. again later, but the Irishmen stayed on and on, and I had my leader to write. Tea was sent in to the Conference at 5.0. At 7.0 Ll. G., Austen Chamberlain, and Birkenhead—our three chief negotiators—retired to formulate new terms, which were handed to the Irishmen at 7.30. They were to return at 10.0 and did

<sup>1</sup> Michael Collins gave to the *Manchester Guardian* an article which was published the day after the signing of the Treaty, on his view of Ireland's status under the Treaty. It should perhaps be recorded here that he refused to take any payment for his article. It should, perhaps, also be recorded that Collins was profoundly impressed by the courage and large sense with which Birkenhead overruled the misgivings of the law officers about the form of oath.

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return at 11.15. At 2.20 the Treaty was signed. I went to lunch with Ll. G. next day. . . .

George was, of course in great spirits but did not say much during lunch. Afterwards I saw him for a few minutes alone. He told me the decision had remained in the balance up to the very last. . . . (I gathered that obligatory free trade between Great Britain and Ireland was one of the last points conceded on the British side, and that Birkenhead's form of the oath had been accepted) . . .

At parting I congratulated Ll. G. warmly and he responded. 'To think,' he said, 'that we have succeeded at last in the task we have both worked at for more than thirty years.' He was jubilant.

Mr Lloyd George's jubilation was justified. It is true that the curse of faction still lay on Irish politics, and that the great triumph that had been gained for her in the Conference by the deep wisdom of Griffith and the spontaneous dexterity of Collins, was spoilt by the scholastic infatuation that kept Mr De Valera's logic in its narrow cell. Mr De Valera had taken no part in the actual Conference, remaining in Ireland. But Griffith and Collins had done for Ireland what Wilson could not do, putting her by the side of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia in the League of Nations, and Mr Lloyd George, Sir Austen Chamberlain, and Lord Birkenhead had rescued England from her disgrace.

A year later the Coalition Government came to an end after a crisis that had caused Scott great anxiety. 'I utterly distrust the Government,' he wrote to Hobhouse about the danger of war in the Near East. 'I fear alike their competence and their disposition. George and Churchill, I fear, dominate their counsels and we have a sample of their capacity in the famous Manifesto, perhaps the most heedless and ill-advised document ever issued by a responsible Government in a time of danger. But it's no use declaiming. We've got to make the best of them.'

He wrote not less strongly in his paper. But the danger passed and its only consequence was one that Scott hailed with delight. The Coalition fell. Mr Lloyd George had been

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a Cabinet Minister for nearly seventeen years without a break, a record equal to that of the younger Pitt. In the first phase Scott had watched him with sympathy and confidence, giving life, spirit, and purpose, to Liberalism, making it the chief driving force for social reform. In the second he had admired him applying to the urgent problems of munitions in the hour of national danger the energy and resourcefulness that he had given to social reconstruction. But for the last six years Mr Lloyd George's great gifts, his darting mind, his rapid initiative, his political courage, and his Jacobin energy, had been at the mercy of one impulse after another, moved here and there by pressure and passion, unchecked and unguided by any steady faith in liberal ideas. From those fatal influences the fall of the Coalition, Scott hoped and believed, had set him free.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AFTER THE COALITION

ON the fall of the Coalition a Conservative Government was formed by Bonar Law, who dissolved Parliament and won a great victory at the polls. At the election held in November 1922, 347 Conservatives were returned, 64 Asquith Liberals, 53 Lloyd George Liberals, and 143 Labour Members. All Scott's efforts were now directed to rebuilding and reuniting the Liberal party. His correspondence with Mr Lloyd George and Lady Oxford illustrates his point of view.

DEAR MR SCOTT,

*November 17, 1922*

You can't feel very happy at having backed the greatest political blackguards and gamblers in our political history. 'Reunion' with what? With a man who was responsible for Reprisals, Protection? War against the Turk? A man who asked more than France from Germany at Versailles? . . .

Yours sincerely,

MARGOT ASQUITH

DEAR MRS ASQUITH,

*November 19, 1922*

I am, of course, not happy at the result of the elections, but I am also not extremely unhappy. I should have liked to see the Liberal party where the Labour party is and Liberalism and Labour commanding together a majority of the House. That is what would have happened if we had had a fair system of representation. But if there was to be a Tory majority I am glad it should be an adequate majority and not one depending on a sort of left-handed Coalition, which would have been nearly as demoralising as the old Coalition.

As to the future, of course there ought to be Liberal reunion, reunion above all of the rank and file. Events will



C. P. SCOTT

soon sort out those who are real Liberals from those who are Tories in disguise. But I hope everything possible will be done to make the transition easy between the Liberal camps.

Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

DEAR MR SCOTT,

*November 21, 1922*

The good temper and wisdom of your letter has touched me. I feel *very* bitter about L. G. ; his is the kind of character I mind most, because I feel his charm and recognise his genius; but he is . . . full of emotion without heart, brilliant without intellect, and a gambler without foresight. He has reduced our prestige and stirred up resentment by his folly—in India, Egypt, Ireland, Poland, Russia, America, and France, and has a genius for open questions.

Yours sincerely,  
MARGOT ASQUITH

DEAR MRS ASQUITH,

*December 21, 1922*

What can I say, except that you are perhaps too kind in what you say of me and too hard in what you say of him. The future is full of difficulty, but it carries with it all our hopes. Reunion, I agree, is, as things stand, impracticable, but is co-operation, having regard to the generous and dignified spirit which exists at least on one side? Some sort of relations there have to be between the two groups in Parliament. Can they not be made consistent with an effective understanding on all questions of procedure and Parliamentary action? I have, perhaps, no right to speak on such a subject except that it concerns us all—me among the rest. What I fear is that a sort of unreasoning partisanship may spring up and grow and may prevent the otherwise inevitable drift of all good Liberals to draw together.

May I send all good wishes which are quite sincere in spite of being conventional.

Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SCOTT

## AFTER THE COALITION

18 ABINGDON STREET, S.W.1.

December 14, 1922

MY DEAR SCOTT,

Apropos of the conversation I had with you the other day, I would like to call your attention to Donald Maclean's speech in Manchester. In the forefront of his address he placed an offensive attack upon the late Government full of wounding words. His attitude towards the present Conservative Government was practically: 'Thank God they are there'; and Liberal reunion was relegated to a few perfunctory sentences at the end of his speech.

This kind of attack provokes retaliation, and once that begins farewell to reunion. This is one out of many indications I have read and witnessed of the undoubted fact that these people are still more concerned about their vendetta against the other wing of the Liberal Party than they are about the prosperity of that Party itself. The country will not look at Liberalism until we have patched up our difficulties. I hear that on all hands. But so far the omens are unhopeful. This is a real misfortune, because the violence of Labour is frightening moderate men away. What I fear is, that they will find no resting place in Liberalism, and that they will not stop until they reach the camp of the Conservative Party. So far the Conservatives have done nothing which would cause them anxiety. My trouble is that as soon as I come back from my holiday I shall have to address a meeting of National Liberal candidates. What am I to say? Am I to take no notice of these attacks by Independent Liberal leaders and their Press? I need hardly say I am not referring to the *Guardian*, but all their special papers are more spiteful than ever. I deeply regret all this.

I was a convinced Coalitionist until the country got out of its troubles, but that has been brought to an end by the action of the Conservatives themselves. The alternative, therefore, is the re-creation of the Liberal Party on a policy which will attract moderate Labour and Progressive Conservatives. It looks to me as if there will be a determined and concerted effort to make this impossible.

Ever sincerely,

D. LLOYD GEORGE

C. P. SCOTT

*December 17, 1922*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

On looking up Maclean's speech again, I find the invective against the Coalition is a good deal stronger than I had remembered. When I heard it, it impressed me as being pretty much common form. After all, a moderate person like myself is obliged to recognise that the post-war Coalition came near to destroying the Liberal Party, and I rejoiced heartily when it came to an end not only for the party's sake, but for your own. Now that you are clear of that entanglement why not just take your own political course and let other people say what they like to say. Nothing will come of any verbal controversies, but policy will determine the issue. Whoever gives the best lead will be the leader. That, at least, is how the thing strikes me, and I think you will gain enormously by ignoring all attacks and concentrating on the constructive work which is now so much needed.

I'm so glad you are going to take a holiday and in such a delightful retreat. By the bye, you will be within half-an-hour's run of Zaghlul Pasha. I wonder if you will be seeing him. I am told he is quite reasonable and moderate, and anything that he accepts Egypt will accept.

Ever yours sincerely,

C. P. SCOTT

MY DEAR SCOTT,

*December 18, 1922*

You are a very wise man, and I propose to take your advice.

Best Xmas wishes to you and your great journal.

Ever sincerely,

D. LLOYD GEORGE

The key to the difficulties created by the rise of a third party Scott found, of course, in Proportional Representation, a reform to which he had been attached from early times. Just after the General Election of 1922 he wrote to Bonar Law and asked whether he might see him. He left on record an interesting conversation that he had with the new Prime Minister.

## AFTER THE COALITION

*Private Papers: December 6/22*

Saw Bonar Law by appointment in his room at the House of Commons in the afternoon. He was extremely friendly and kept me for nearly an hour. Reminded me that the last time we met was at the Colonial Office during the war. He also recalled an incident of the 1910 Election in Manchester when he was defeated in N.W. Manchester, and at the count of the votes I said (so he reported, but I don't quite believe it) that he had lost our votes but won our respect, to which he answered he would have preferred the votes. I hope I never did say anything so patronising and sententious. My object in seeing him was to find if he would consider the introduction of Proportional Representation or the Alternative vote so as to give the Liberal party (at present in danger of being ground down between the upper and nether millstones of Conservatism and Labour) a fair standing ground on which it could hold its own. He acknowledged that the destruction of the Liberal party was the last thing he desired, but refused entirely to admit that, once reunited, it would be in any such danger. 'You will have a chance,' he said, 'when we grow unpopular.' . . .

As to the position of parties, he said the real reason why the Conservative party had won the election was that the people were sick of the Coalition and wanted a change. The only party which could hope to establish an independent Government was the Conservative party, so people voted for it. 'When I came home from abroad after two years,' he said, 'I noticed a very great change in opinion. The House was a different House. I warned Lloyd George a month before the Carlton Club Meeting of this, and advised him to retire while he could do so with dignity and that the longer he stayed the worse the position would be. He said he would consider the matter and speak to me again in a week. I saw at once that he did not mean to do it. He did nothing and the vote at the Carlton Club was the result. We had been very good friends up to that time and I hope we shall be again. He is the most outstanding figure in our politics, the best fighting man. Asquith is old and tired. My experience

## C. P. SCOTT

is that all Prime Ministers suffer by suppression. Their friends do not tell them the truth; they tell them what they want to hear. It was so with Asquith. I remember just before the change of Government he would not believe that there was any general movement on the Conservative side against him. He thought I was the only Conservative Minister who would support Lloyd George. He asked me if I stood alone. I said: "no *all*, because the party means it." That is how George also was misled. People are always apt to think that what has been will be—I am less inclined perhaps than most men to that error because of my early training. I was in the iron trade, a highly speculative business with frequent violent fluctuations in prices. Thus during the war when the Government were proposing to guarantee agricultural prices, believing that the existing high lead would be maintained, I warned them of the very great risk they were running and so it turned out.'

As to the Labour party, he would not admit that the Liberal party stood in any serious danger. Labour was now, he believed, at the top of the wave and would now progressively decline. It owed its present position mainly to the divisions in the Liberal party, and the Coalition had done for it more in two years than it could have done for itself in twenty. Liberals had only to unite in order to reassert themselves as against Labour. The intellectuals who had gone over to Labour did not really belong to them. They were alienated by the Liberal divisions. Liberals at present were more intent on fighting each other than on fighting their opponents. It would be time enough to talk of any change in the method of elections after they had done that and failed. He was against Proportional Representation. That meant the group system. But he admitted that the group system was inevitable if you had three parties of approximately equal strength.

Obviously he had not faced the fact that, under the existing system of election, this condition was likely to persist unless it were ended by the disruption of the Liberal party.

From the fall of the Coalition down to Scott's death,

## AFTER THE COALITION

progressive politics were perplexed by the problems arising from the relations of parties and the relations of persons. A Labour Government took office in 1924.<sup>1</sup> All the more active Liberal elements were in sympathy with the Labour Government, and ready to help it. For the first time since 1918 England had a House of Commons in which the parties of the Left were in a majority. Scott was most anxious that this opportunity for progressive legislation should not be wasted, and he used his influence with leaders in both parties to encourage co-operation. He saw in the condition of the coal industry an excellent opportunity for common action, for the Liberals were in favour of nationalising royalties and reorganising the industry on bold lines. But the Labour Government, and in particular the Labour Prime Minister, were sensitive and suspicious, dreading and resenting Liberal patronage, and Liberals on their side were often difficult, tactless, and inconsiderate. Scott bitterly regretted the unnecessary dissolution of the autumn of 1924. For that mishap he divided the blame between the two progressive parties. The General Election of 1924 ended in a bad defeat for Labour, but a much worse defeat for Liberals, who came back with 42 members, instead of 158. Labour fell from 191 to 152, the Conservatives rose from 258 to 415.

In 1923 the Asquith Liberals and the Lloyd George Liberals had been thrown together by the threat to Free Trade, but this uneasy peace within the party was broken in the General Strike of May 1926. Lord Oxford blamed Mr Lloyd George for acting independently of the party, and sent him a letter unusually severe in its terms, breaking off relations. Mr Lloyd George consulted Scott about his answer, travelling to Manchester for the purpose. Scott was strongly on Mr Lloyd George's side, for he believed that the danger was not that the General Strike would succeed, or that it would commend itself to the British people as a form of political action, but that if it were mishandled it would lead to a bitter class quarrel with lasting results. A class war

<sup>1</sup> The figures for the General Election of 1923 were, Conservatives, 258; Labour, 191, Liberals, 158.

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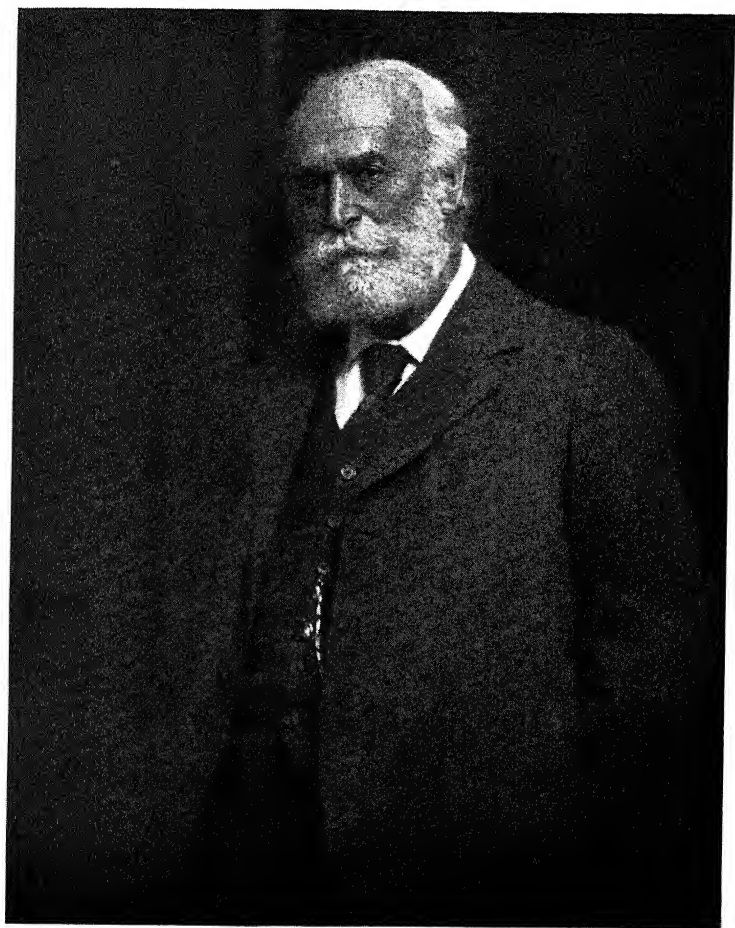
had broken out, so to speak, by accident, and there was a real risk that it might pass into a class war that was deliberate. For this reason Scott welcomed the tone and argument of Mr Lloyd George's speeches, as he welcomed the famous sermon given to the world by the Archbishop of Canterbury. When Lord Oxford sent his challenge to Mr Lloyd George, it was to Scott that Mr Lloyd George turned for advice. Scott left on record what happened.

### *Private Papers*

Perhaps the most serviceable thing I ever did for Ll. G. was at the time of his rupture with Oxford in May 1926.

Lord Oxford's letter to Ll. G. reprimanding him for his non-attendance at a meeting of the shadow Cabinet in connection with the Coal Strike and threat of a General Strike, and practically cutting him off from the communion of the party was written on Thursday, May 20, and despatched to Ll. G. by hand. It was acknowledged by Ll. G. on the following day. He said he would 'take two or three days to consider and consult' with his friends before replying, adding that he was 'off to the north to-day'. The north meant Manchester. I dined with him at the Midland and went through his proposed reply to Lord O. with him. It was written with considerable acerbity. I cut out everything provocative and left it full of mildness and dignity. He accepted the revision with complete good humour and has often joked about it since. The letter was sent on Ll. G.'s return to Criccieth on Monday, May 24th, and received in London on the following day. Lord Oxford's denunciatory letter had been sent to the Press for publication about an hour previously and was published on Wednesday, May 26th. Ll. G.'s reply appeared alongside of it and it was thus effectively countered.

On May 21, Scott wrote to a friend: 'Ll. G. is coming to Manchester "on his way" to Wales and I am to dine with him at the Midland. There is no doubt that his position in the party is threatened. Of course, journalism is not his job, and he ought not to have been tempted to earn money in



*Photograph by F. W. Schmidt, Manchester*  
C. P. Scott at eighty





## AFTER THE COALITION

that way. But apart from that general objection I don't think the American article is open to serious criticism, and his general plea for moderation is wholly to his credit.'

On June 4, 1926, Scott wrote in the *Manchester Guardian*. 'If there is to be censure of Mr George what is it to be about? All sorts of grounds have been suggested, mostly of a somewhat intangible description—his changeableness, his lack of discipline, his "disloyalty", his imagined intrigues with Labour—to every one of which Mr George should be able to reply with damaging effect. The one definite and tangible accusation is that, when social peace was in the balance and the country was threatened with an immense disaster, he had the courage to preach conciliation and to be right when his official leader was wrong. That is a course for which he makes no apology, and which he will be prepared to defend through thick and thin.'

A letter that Scott wrote a few months later to Mrs Lejeune, one of his closest friends, gives his view of his relations with Mr Lloyd George.

*December 26, 1926*

. . . And about Ll. G.—I'm glad you don't agree with me because it is a challenge—much more than Dillon's—and one has to justify oneself to one's self. I say to myself, as I said to Lady Oxford—ask yourself this: Would our political life be richer or poorer if Ll. G. were to disappear to-morrow. I cannot doubt for an instant as to the answer. And as to the Liberal party it could receive no heavier blow. There was a time when I felt as you do. The whole Black-and-Tan episode was to my mind damnable, alike from the moral and the political point of view, and for many months I had no communication with him. I was wrong, and he reproached me for it afterwards. I could probably have prevented the worst—at least I ought to have challenged it personally, as well as through the paper. In his Carnarvon speech he had said something insolent about the paper and I took that as meaning a breach. And then—strange being!—he redeemed himself. He negotiated the 'Treaty' with rebellious Ireland, and made the Tories responsible for it. No other human

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being could have done it, or attempted it. That was in the small hours. I met him when it was all over and he said to me, with real emotion, 'At last we have won Home Rule.' The Tories have never forgiven him, and it was the real cause of his downfall. That, you may say, is to judge him by merely political standards. So it is, but then politics are in a real sense a branch of morals. There is more in it than that. I have affinities with L. G. I am a realist, as is he: I try to see things as they are and to get to the heart of a situation just as he does. And I like his courage and his open mind. Perhaps I am flattered by the fact that he likes and respects me, constantly seeks my opinion and usually acts upon it. Perhaps I delude myself, and the wizard all the time is playing with me. I am an unsuspicious person, but somehow I don't think it's quite like that. Forgive all this talk about myself; it's partly addressed to myself. Then again one must not forget that there's a root of rectitude in L. G. As old Loreburn always said: he really does care for 'the underdog'....

Scott refers here to a suggestion that was sometimes made by those who lamented this friendship. It was believed in some quarters that Scott allowed himself to be influenced by Mr Lloyd George's flattery. Scott would have been the last to deny that if a man asks and takes your advice you are pre-disposed in his favour. But nobody can read the letters that passed between the two men or the articles that Scott wrote, without realising that however warm his personal sympathies, he kept a free hand and a free mind about Mr Lloyd George's policy. Mr Lloyd George stood without any lasting breach the most unsparing censure. Perhaps this is the subtlest flattery of all, to take the most severe criticism from a man's pen and yet cherish his friendship. But flattery of that kind demands qualities in the flatterer that are too uncommon to make it a serious danger to private or public morality.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In February, 1919, it was proposed to make Mr Lloyd George an honorary member of the Manchester Reform Club, with a view to making him President later. Scott wrote two articles in the paper on February 8 and February 14 criticising this suggestion strongly, recalling the facts of the December election, and arguing that Mr Lloyd George was not entitled

## AFTER THE COALITION

The truth about Scott's view of Mr Lloyd George is well hit off in a jest that used to go round the corridor of the *Manchester Guardian*:

A.: Who's writing the Long to-night?

B.: C.P.

A.: What is the subject?

B.: Saving Lloyd George's soul again.

Scott believed that Mr Lloyd George was the greatest executive force in politics. This was also Asquith's view, expressed in one of the most generous letters ever written by one public man to another.<sup>1</sup> For in all personal relationships Asquith showed himself a singularly magnanimous man, able not only to recognise the special gifts of a colleague, but to rejoice that they should be recognised by others, even in cases where his own reputation suffered by contrast. To read that letter is to understand why Asquith was followed with such loyalty by the men who served under him, and why Campbell-Bannerman called him 'the greatest gentleman he had ever known'. Mr Lloyd George had not the personal qualities that keep a hold like this on the confidence of colleagues, but he had by universal admission the kind of dynamic personality that is specially needed in a moving age. The energies that he collected and directed to the study of social problems, from his first efforts for sick and unemployment insurance down to the admirable work of the Liberal Industrial Enquiry, constitute a record to which no parallel can be found in the work of any politician or any group of politicians of his time. Scott learned to mistrust Mr Lloyd George's temperament, but he never ceased to admire this energy. He thought that when a man of uncertain and

to the confidence of a Liberal club. On February 22 he went to breakfast with Mr Lloyd George who greeted him: "So I didn't judge him worthy to be a member of the Manchester Reform Club?" I said it was a challenge and had to be met. "I don't mind," he said, "because I know that with you there's no malice. I always read what you say and sometimes I profit by it. As for the *Daily News* and *Nation* I never heed them because I know that in their eyes I never can do right. I know beforehand what they are going to say. But with you it is otherwise. You can say what you like. I shan't resent it." And with that we went to breakfast.'

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd George's *War Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 239.

## C. P. SCOTT

impulsive character has so much to give it is worth while making a great effort to get the best out of him.

A letter that he wrote to Dillon at this time recalls some of the struggles that had engaged the last years of his life.

*February 22, 1926*

It was ever so nice to see your familiar handwriting once more with all its kind words. Yes, it's a stiff fight for us poor Liberals. . . . But, after all, it's our case we must trust to and not its official exponents. You of all men know best what that means, for in the old days, when you had your own fight to fight, I always held you the best Liberal in the House, and time and again you put our professing Liberals to shame. Shall I tell you my wife was your warm admirer and you could move her as hardly any other. But then she had the full dramatic instinct and I think you met there. . . . I feel all you say about Ireland. Tragedy is a poor battered word and the reality goes deeper than that. To think of the wonderful fight you of the Irish party fought and brought within an ace of victory. And to think of all it meant—a united Ireland, civil war undreamt of, a gradual and secure evolution to the destined nationhood, and of what we see in its place. Even the Tories can see they were wrong now and the honest ones, like Chamberlain, have confessed it.

Scott was still confident that Liberalism had services to render to the nation, and he was specially enthusiastic about the work of the Liberal Summer School, and the valuable reports on land and industry prepared by its committees with expert help from outside. In 1929, when the second Labour Government took office, he pressed again for co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the second Labour Government was not more happy than that of the first, and it came to an end under circumstances which threw all politics into confusion. Scott was by that time no longer editor, but he and his son were in agreement in holding that Mr Lloyd George had given the best advice to the party.

<sup>1</sup> The figures at the 1929 election were, Labour, 288, Conservatives, 260, Liberals, 59.

## AFTER THE COALITION

At the time of the emergency election of 1931, Scott wrote to his son from Bognor: 'I don't feel happy to be in exile with so much happening and the Liberal party in danger, it seems, of going all wrong. Ll. G. seems to me the only Liberal leader who has courage and insight to deal with the situation, and he, unhappily, is out of the fighting ranks. . . .'

To Lady Boyd Dawkins he wrote a few days later (October 18, 1931): ' . . . I had to leave Bognor in a great hurry because of the political upset—not that Ted needed my assistance, but it's always apt to be more or less a help to have someone to talk things over with—especially as we are breaking right away from the bulk of the party—which is simply delivering itself bound hand and foot to the tender mercies of the Tory party, whose prime object is to plant Protection, as a permanent policy, firmly on our necks.

'Ll. G. is the only man in the party who sees this and we shall back him for all we are worth. If he hadn't been for the moment disabled this folly could not have occurred. . . .'

Scott's last years were crowded with honours. In May, 1921, the *Manchester Guardian* celebrated two anniversaries; the paper itself was just a hundred years old and Scott had been editor just fifty years. Scott received congratulations from the King, who spoke of the courage and high-mindedness of his editorship, and from the leaders and newspapers of all parties. He was entertained at a great dinner in Manchester over which Lord Derby presided, at which Lord Robert Cecil<sup>1</sup> and Mrs Fawcett spoke of his devotion to causes that were outside party. In 1921 he was made LL.D. of Manchester University, and in 1923 an honorary Fellow of his old college at Oxford. In 1926 his eightieth birthday was celebrated by the presentation of his bust by Epstein to the city of Manchester, to be kept, as Lord Derby said on the occasion, 'as a memorial of one who in difficult times always tried to do his duty.' Manchester received the gift but all England gave it, for the subscribers included the most eminent names in politics, religion, art, and

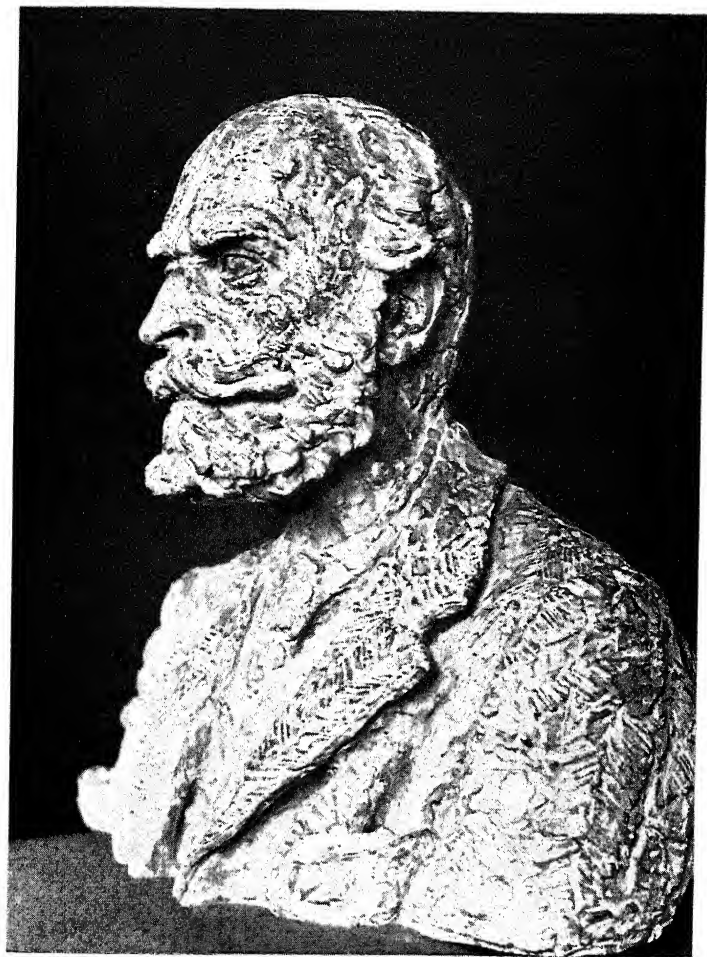
<sup>1</sup> Lord Robert Cecil said that the *Manchester Guardian* had made righteousness readable.

## C. P. SCOTT

letters; three ex-Prime Ministers,<sup>1</sup> the two Archbishops, the leading politicians of all parties, the Poet Laureate, and such writers and artists as Galsworthy, Shaw, Wells, Bennett, Gilbert Murray, Nevinson, Masfield, Muirhead Bone, Rothenstein, Francis Dodd, Max Beerbohm, and Barrie. Nor were the subscribers limited to Scott's fellow-countrymen; they included M. Vénizélos, Count Sforza, Dr Breitscheid, Dr Brentano, Professor Bonn, and M. Stefannson. In the course of his speech on this occasion Scott gave in a terse form his views of the functions of a newspaper. 'A newspaper has two sides to it. On the one hand, it is a business like any other business, carried on for profit and depending on profit for prosperity or existence. On the other hand, it may be described as a public-utility service, a service which may be performed well or ill, but which, on the whole, is essential to the interests of the public. These two elements in the life and purpose of a newspaper are not always in accord; they may even violently conflict. Yet on their harmony the character and usefulness of a newspaper must depend.'

After a reference to the growth of newspaper syndicates, he made an allusion to his own paper which excited great enthusiasm. 'There are papers which will never be sold—which would rather suffer extinction. And it is well that it should be so. The public has its rights. The paper which has grown up in a great community, nourished by its resources, reflecting in a thousand ways its spirit and its interests, in a real sense belongs to it. How else except in the permanence of that association can it fulfil its duty or repay the benefits and the confidence it has received?'

<sup>1</sup> Asquith, Mr Lloyd George, and Mr MacDonald. Mr Baldwin, then Prime Minister, sent him the following letter: 'I have been very pleased to learn of the presentation which is being made to you on the celebration of your eightieth birthday. I should have liked to include my name among the supporters of the presentation but that would have entailed a departure from my customary practice which might have created an embarrassing precedent. I cannot, however, let the occasion go by without sending you a personal note to indicate to you how warmly I appreciate the work which you have performed and the services which you have rendered over a long period of years. You have set a striking example to your profession which has won the respect and admiration of men of all sections and parties whatever their political views.'



A bust by Epstein





## AFTER THE COALITION

In the next few years Scott had the misfortune to lose two friends who had been associated closely with the fortunes of the *Manchester Guardian*. C. E. Montague had left the staff of the paper in 1925, retiring to Burford to pursue his literary work, but he had remained on the board of directors. In May 1928, when on a visit to Manchester for a University function and a board meeting, he was taken ill suddenly and died of pneumonia in Scott's house. Montague had married Scott's only daughter, Madeline, in 1898, and until 1925 he had lived within a stone's throw of Scott, sharing with him the interests of his family and the interests of the newspaper. The loss of Montague was followed in June 1929, by that of L. T. Hobhouse. He, like Montague, was a director and in constant association throughout his life with his old friend and editor.

In July 1929, Scott decided to retire from the editorship, remaining the governing director of the *Manchester Guardian*. The news of his resignation was received in England and in foreign countries with a sympathy and interest which showed that, having found the *Manchester Guardian* a paper important to Manchester, he was leaving it a paper important to the world. Of the tributes that were paid to him only a few can be mentioned here. The King sent a message—'For fifty-seven years you have been responsible for the conduct of a great newspaper, and his Majesty, while regretting your resignation, congratulates you on an achievement which must surely be unique in the annals of journalism.' The Archbishop of York, preaching in Manchester Cathedral, prefaced his sermon with the following allusion. 'A great newspaper is a potent factor in modern life, and Manchester is justly proud, both of its great journal and of its citizen who made that journal great. Alike in the selection of material that should find place in its columns and in the guidance offered to nations or cities he has made righteousness a standard of action and conscience the arbiter of policy. For such an exercise of widespread influence we should thank God.'

The Prime Minister, Mr Ramsay MacDonald, wrote of Scott's noble work to make the world a better place to live in ;

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General Smuts wrote that Scott's work had strengthened the roots of the good life in innumerable other lives; the Swedish Minister, Baron Palmstierna, said that he spoke for the northern countries of Europe in regretting Scott's retirement and in praising his influence in foreign lands; Signor Nitti said that Scott had made the *Manchester Guardian* the most authoritative organ of the European movement for democracy and peace. In the Press, both at home and abroad, remarkable tributes were paid to the qualities which had given an international reputation to a man the whole of whose work as a journalist had been anonymous.

It was a great delight to Scott after receiving praise and honour from all parts of the world to receive in his old age the greatest honour Manchester could bestow. In April 1930, he became a freeman of the city. Thirty Lancashire and Cheshire mayors took part in the ceremony, and speeches were made by the Bishop of Manchester and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool. Scott made a reply which was at once appropriate and characteristic. Manchester was a great metropolitan city known all over the world for her trade and her traders. But that was not Manchester's only claim to renown. In the ancient world commerce and culture had gone hand in hand, and Manchester had followed that great example in founding her University and offering to her industrial people the education in the arts and sciences which had become a monopoly of the well-to-do in the ancient universities. He went on to speak of the problems that still awaited solution. 'To abolish the slums, to restrain overcrowding, to reduce, if so it may be, our vast canopy of smoke—to bring light to the bodies as well as the minds of the people—these are no easy tasks. . . . It is, above all, because I am convinced that the governing body of this great city has alike the power and the will to deal with them that I am proud to become an honorary freeman of Manchester.'

That speech reflected the spirit of Scott's career. He was a realist with a careful eye to practical needs; a man of culture with a sense of the importance of ideas and of the arts that inspire and express them; a man of action ready for bold remedies, and to the end of his life a man of faith

## AFTER THE COALITION

who believed that no wrong existed which could not be set right by courage and goodwill.

To a man so active as Scott it is not easy to retire even at the age of eighty-two. But Scott had everything to make retirement happy that a man could want. He left his paper in strong hands. Of the men who were to serve under his son and successor the two most important, the assistant editor, Mr W. P. Crozier, and the London editor, Mr James Bone, had been on the staff of the paper for thirty years. They had earned the confidence that Scott, as a rule, gave slowly, but gave without stint when a man's quality was proved beyond all doubt. He had given a striking proof of his confidence in making them directors of the paper some years earlier.

Scott used to say that fortune had been very kind to him, but kindest of all in enabling him to hand over his paper to his sons with firm trust and pride. His eldest son, as we have seen, had died in 1908. His second son, John Russell, had gone from Rugby to Trinity, Cambridge, as an exhibitor, and had taken a First Class in the Mechanical Science Tripos. Engineering had been his first choice as a career, but his father diverted him to the business department of the paper. He became manager after Taylor's death, at a critical moment in the paper's fortunes, and steered the ship through difficult waters. Before Scott retired his son had acquired a leading position in the newspaper world, and Scott knew that the fortunes and the honour of the paper were in safe hands.

His youngest son, Edward Taylor, succeeded him as editor. In some respects E. T. Scott was unlike his father. He had not found his feet either at Rugby or at Oxford, and all the interest his father had taken in the humanities had gone in his case into economics. This education he had received from Mr J. A. Hobson and from the London School of Economics. Father and son had, however, certain gifts in common, for the younger Scott had his father's faculty for enjoying hard and solid study, and his father's gift of writing. E. T. Scott had a rare power of keeping an argument on its legs day after day, of so conducting a debate

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as to escape that sense of weariness which so often overtakes both writer and reader when a controversy becomes old and stale. For without any use of rhetoric or emotion he could put the most difficult and complex argument into an easy and attractive form. He was naturally a most fair-minded man who liked to bring his difficulties into the open. This quality gave his readers confidence. They were, in fact, following the argument which was proceeding in his own mind, not an argument which he was assembling as an advocate who had to make the best case he could. His father put more and more work upon his son, and nobody who lacked his power of mastering solid and difficult problems could have responded to the demand made on him as leader-writer. His humour, his sympathy, his natural courtesy, and his freedom from any kind of self-importance made him a delightful companion and a delightful colleague.

If Scott was happy in the circumstances of his retirement, he was fortunate in the time of his death. He died in the early hours of New Year's Day, 1932. Three months later his son, who had entered on his task with all his father's courage and all his father's sense of duty, lost his life in the waters of Windermere.



E. T. Scott (from a drawing by Francis Dodd, A.R.A.)



## CHAPTER XVII

### 'C. P. S.' IN THE OFFICE

*By W. P. Crozier*<sup>1</sup>

FOR many years 'C. P. S.' arrived at the *Guardian* office at 6 p.m., latterly by car, before that on the famous bicycle. Mounting the stairs to his room with a purposive air, he thrust the door to with a vigorous left-hand push without looking behind him. The bang announced the presence to his staff. A few moments later, having unpacked and handed over to a Messenger two eggs, salt wrapped up in a screw of paper, milk and, sometimes, an apple, all of which he had brought from home,<sup>2</sup> he spread out the evening papers on his desk and was ready for all comers. No interruption, no visitor, no office conference was allowed to delay the sacred task of fixing for the night the subject of 'the Long'. This was the Long Leader, prime instrument of policy, the voice, persuasive or protestant, for whose utterance, more than for any other single purpose, he believed the paper to exist. Suddenly, murmuring 'I must see about the Leader', he would hurry from the room, and the resumption of the conference depended on the conversation demanded by the Long. Whether in the leader-writer's room or in 'C. P.'s', the discussion was not hustled. Chief reporters, chief sub-editors, editorial writers who desired to see him, might kick their heels: no matter; other joinery must wait while the Ark of the Covenant was planned. It waited still more if 'C. P.' himself wrote the Leader. The writers of the Long were, by sanctity of office, protected from disturbance, but practice invaded tradition according to the standing of the writer. 'C. P.' was not disturbed without strong reason. He began early, made notes, perhaps sent for one of his big

<sup>1</sup> Appointed by 'C. P. S.' to the *Manchester Guardian* in 1903.

<sup>2</sup> In earlier days he sent out for three brown scones and a pot of cream. He kept a butter-jar on a little ledge which he had had constructed outside the window of his room.



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volumes of cuttings, or scurried off, sometimes almost running, to get one of his men to remove or confirm a doubt; back in his room, he settled to work intently. Usually he wrote in ink and then, like others, when he corrected he wrote over the line; when he used pencil, he would open the right-hand top drawer of his desk, extract a big piece of india-rubber, efface the offending passage, replace the india-rubber, shut the drawer, all with great briskness, and then carefully substitute the amended words.

The Leader finished, he turned to letters and memoranda. On some of these he had written initials, whose owners he now summoned or visited in order to make a suggestion, offer a criticism or ask for explanation. Then he dictated letters or wrote them in his own hand, as to the last he often did; in consenting to have letters typed he had yielded only to necessity, through the compulsion of an injured right hand and after the failure of an obstinate attempt to teach himself to use his left. By this time the proofs of the Leader had come down, and again he was absorbed. He went warily over what he had written, tightening an argument, expressing with finer exactitude the desired shade of meaning, rewriting whole passages. Occasionally he asked someone to read over his Leader. 'See if I've got the facts right,' he would say, or 'See if you think I've been too violent.' If it were a matter of tone, of undue severity, of possible obscurity, he was quick to be convinced. Saying, 'That's what I was rather doubtful about,' he would take the pen of correction. Proofs sent up, he worked again at correspondence or paid more visits or, gathering up his letters, which he girded into a stout bundle with an india-rubber band, he stuffed them into a coat pocket and rapidly disappeared. He had no fixed time for leaving. His cheerful 'Good night, Charlie!'<sup>1</sup> or 'Good night, Ted!'<sup>2</sup> as he looked into the room next to his own was the signal to those within range that he was going. Sometimes, to a subordinate who had failed to catch him unoccupied, it was a signal for pursuit. He did not allow such interviews to be prolonged, but he was seldom impatient. When he had gone to bed, so

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Montague.

<sup>2</sup> E. T. Scott.

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that he could no longer be reached on the telephone, it might be found that an inaccuracy had crept into his leader or had been created in it by the arrival of later news. In that case, whoever was 'in charge' corrected the error and sent him an explanation. Unless plain error was discovered it was well to resist suggestions that 'C. P.'s' words should be improved. It is known that Homer nodded, but not what Homer said when he was told about it. For reasonable corrections 'C. P.' sent down a note of thanks. 'I'm glad you did,' he would say, 'very stupid of me!' He had phrases for situations, and 'stupid' was his word for himself when he desired to make confession.

When 'C. P.' revised Leaders he allowed great freedom of treatment to his writers, but much more on subjects in which he was not personally expert than on others, like domestic politics, about which he felt strongly. He desired diversity of individual thought but, since it had to be consistent with the moral and political unity which the paper through him represented, he modified, rewrote, and sometimes 'spiked' the work of others to the satisfaction of his conscience. The process of amendment or of destruction was left, by the tradition of the office, to convey its bleak lesson to the original writer. So, also, he encouraged the individuality of foreign correspondents. They had the large liberties of independent thinking within the bounds of the spirit of the paper's policies. Except within the same frontiers outside contributors, even the famous, were not welcome. 'C. P.' was chary of asking Bernard Shaw or Dean Inge for contributions because 'when we got them we might not like them.

If 'C. P.' was 'taking Shorts' (revising Short Leaders) he drew his subjects from the events of the night, from the cuttings which some member of the staff had left in the morning at his house, and from other cuttings which were put on his desk in the early evening. These cuttings presented a field of adventure uncharted, unchartable, and, for the staff, alarming. 'C. P.' had the good journalist's capacity for being interested in many subjects and of coming to each of them, whether it was new or only new

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to him, with fresh excitement. His mental excitations, which he assumed his staff to share, were thought by some to be extreme. The novice who was asked to discuss the influence of breast-feeding on the dentition of the young, soon learned to fend off the terrible unknown by spontaneous suggestion; infantile dentition, though he might hastily concede to 'C. P.' its social and scientific importance, might be repelled by the offer of a Short on the poor spirit of Londoners who did not even own their gas and water, or the Marbles Championship of the Middle West, or perhaps (a certain winner) Miss Violet Douglas-Pennant. But 'C. P.' was difficult to evade. To a reluctant writer professing inadequate knowledge he said, 'Well, but, my dear fellow, ask questions about it; say we want to know,' or, 'Well, at any rate you seem to know more about it than anyone else, so—if you could manage a short one?' and then he was gone. He was gentle, with a formidable gentleness. So many things stirred him that by the end of the evening he often had far more Shorts than could be used. The superfluous perished, like infants exposed, without recognition outside the family.

In the whole field of writing and of editorship the liberty of treatment which 'C. P.' allowed was conditioned by moral principles which he applied with great fidelity. A Long Leader by any other of the prophets would have begun with 'The word of the Lord that came to . . .' 'C. P.', without revelation, had the same direct conviction of what was right and wrong. By this he guided himself among the maze of questions which, since no man can be master of all subjects, he did not profess to understand in detail. By this more than all he impressed his personality, as sincere in purpose as it was independent in thought, on the instrument by which he moved opinion. He rated moral earnestness most highly in his staff. Of an invaluable colleague it was rumoured that there had at one time been grave doubts how he would turn out: had not 'C. P.' said that he was 'a little lacking in moral earnestness'? He was amused but not displeased

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when he heard that two of his men had been described as the ‘twin Galsworthies of the *Guardian* office’.<sup>1</sup> In his rightness about principle he would not compromise. His view of that new phenomenon, the giant sweepstake, he expressed with simplicity. He thought it dangerously demoralising, and ‘the most unfortunate people,’ he said, ‘are those who win the prizes.’ When a discussion raged about a fundamental question, when he thought that anyone was proposing to palter with principle, then the eyes flashed and the beard shook and the Commandments came down again in thunder and lightning. He was a poor speaker, but in writing he had a voice whose sound was like the sea.

In the actual business of composition ‘C. P.’ stood for argumentative, reasonable moderation. If he looked into a room and said, ‘I liked your leader—very persuasive,’ he gave his highest praise. He disliked intemperance of speech. His occasional vehemence in conversation misled the unwary, who, having engaged with him in mutual severities against an offence or an offender, sat down and wrote with equal passion, only to find that ‘C. P.,’ revising, had eliminated from the argument all trace of violence. ‘A fine article,’ he said once, referring to a man of strong views—‘a fine article: X holding himself in.’ He liked people to feel deeply, think clearly, and hold themselves in. It was only towards the end, when his grip was at last relaxing, that he passed intemperate utterance. He approved of a man who grappled with the strongest points of an opponent’s case; ‘there has been no one like him,’ he said of a fine journalist who was leaving the paper, ‘for getting to the heart of a subject.’ He liked plain, muscular work. ‘Clear and vigorous’ was one of his phrases of approval. Provided that a writer, having something to say, said it well, he thought the niceties of style unimportant. The flamboyant and the rhetorical offended him; when an enthusiastic reader sent him a scream of delight about an article in the paper, he cut it out and sent it to one of his staff with the comment, ‘I don’t agree: much too

<sup>1</sup> Before Mr Galsworthy got the ‘O.M.’

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rich.' He made war on woolliness. He once gave a man the proofs of an overgrown leader. 'Would you take a quarter of a column out of this thing by X,' he said, 'I have to go early and it's turned out much too long.' 'Any particular part that I should go for, Mr Scott?' 'Oh,' he said, 'it doesn't matter; you can get it out almost anywhere.' As a sub-editor he got rid of the redundant and the turgid with the conscientiousness of a machine that presses the superfluous moisture out of yarn. The man who passed 'seaward journey to the great metropolis,' and when the 'copy' came back to him, found written in firm blue pencil 'voyage to London' knew what sort of English 'C. P.' liked. Once, when an article in type was shown to him because a certain sentence expressed a doubtful judgment, he noticed that the English was slovenly, amended it, and then, being drawn on from sentence to sentence and becoming more and more dissatisfied, he made innumerable minute corrections until at last, having made a complete mess of the proof, he looked up and said gently, 'Dear X; of course, he's not a trained sub-editor.'

Thinking as he did of his function and that of his paper, he spared others as little as himself. An autocrat, he would have said that it was 'the good of the paper,' not he, that made supreme demands. When he was told, as occasionally happened, that someone had left the *Guardian* for one of the great dailies, he was amused. 'Really?' he said, throwing his head back as at a joke; after all, not everyone could be expected to understand the privilege of door-keeping in the Temple. He hardly realised that individuals, although devoted to the paper, might not always be able to submerge their personal view. When it was suggested to him that a senior of ability might not like being turned into an assistant to a junior on a new piece of work, he said with severity, 'I don't think he will object if it is for the good of the paper.' When one of his best men, on leaving, mentioned to him that he had resented the elevation of a junior over his head to a distinguished position where no suggestion of superior merit could be made, 'C. P.' said simply, with great sincerity, 'It never occurred

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to me.’ His demands on those whom he trusted were ruthless. ‘By the way,’ he once said, ‘will you take part of X’s work next week? He wants to have a week’s holiday. He says he’s tired. Why are these young men tired? You and I are never tired.’ He once, from his house, rang up the same man, whose hours were then from about 5.0 P.M. to 3.0 A.M., and said, ‘Old Blank is staying with me and we want to get out a pamphlet on the Persian question. I thought you’d like to help. We mustn’t lose any time, so would you be here by ten o’clock? We could make an early start, have lunch and get on in the afternoon before we go down to the office.’ This lasted for some days. At the finish he remarked, ‘I should think you’ve always liked hard work.’ Having with difficulty collected about him men whom he trusted, he desired them to be available, by which he meant at their desks; the system of sending members of the indoors staff occasionally out of doors, whether at home or abroad, in order to increase their experience might, he admitted, have its value, but it was, he thought, ‘very inconvenient’. He did not practise it. He thought that his staff should be kept well occupied. ‘What exactly,’ he said once, ‘does X do?’ naming an important person. ‘Yes,’ he said, on hearing the answer, ‘but that can’t take him long.’ It was, perhaps, not unconnected with the inquiry that X was shortly afterwards reported to be missing his last tram home.

He would let no one increase holidays, which ran from Saturday to Saturday, by adding to them the Friday before or the Sunday after, even if the holiday-maker was entitled to it as a legitimate ‘day-off’ according to the rules. When he discovered that one experimenter, full of ignorance or of art, was proposing to split his holiday into four separate weeks and add a lawful Sunday ‘off’ to each of them, his indignation was profound. In practice he often conceded what in principle he refused, adding, ‘Don’t tell anyone; it mustn’t be a precedent.’

Since he regarded the paper more as an influence than as a newssheet, ‘C. P.’ was not interested in circulation as a counting of heads nor in advertisements as a means

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of profit. He desired more readers in order that his ideas might be, if not accepted, intelligently discussed; he sought the circulation that brought the advertisements that provided the revenue that improved the paper as an engine for the moving of opinion. He neither courted the advertiser nor without reason offended him. If there were reason, it was a pity. He watched the advertisements lest anything unseemly or unsightly should creep in, and he used to say that the less the editorial and the advertisement departments had to do with each other the better for the paper. When a rash young man remarked to him that it must be difficult to conduct a certain feature without yielding to pressure from advertisers, 'C. P.' said to a senior, 'I felt like kicking him downstairs.'

He desired circulation but not at the cost of the character of the paper. When circulation figures were good he liked to give the credit to the quality of the leader-columns; when they were not so good, he turned a questioning eye on the news departments. About new ideas he was willing but slow to be convinced. Realising the tough conservatism of the loyal subscriber, he frowned on 'jumpiness'; but he was willing to consider any change that might confirm old readers or bring new ones. He would consider with detachment the adoption of a serial story or regular verse or caricatures, but at the close there was the same formula—'of course they would have to be very good.' Many warm debates ended, like a Cabinet meeting, in indecision; who could say how much of the masses might be won over by the 'very good' at 2d? Such discussions had surprises for 'C. P.', who knew nothing about the suburbs of literature. Someone suggested facetiously that a serial story might be procured from Allen Raine or Ruby M. Ayres. 'C. P.' repeated the names slowly, thought, and said firmly, 'I never heard of either of them.' When verse was discussed, Wilhelmina Stitch was mentioned. 'What a funny name!' said 'C. P.' 'I never heard of her—who is she?' It was explained that she was a great 'puller' of circulation. 'Well,' said 'C. P.' briskly, 'that sounds promising, doesn't it?' On further illumination

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about popular verse he passed to another subject. After the conference was over he went to one of those who had taken part and said, ‘I want to know—do you really think that more verse might bring more circulation? Of course we could only have the best.’

As the years went on, he introduced into the paper new features to meet new tastes. To some of them he would have assented long before had it not been for the Old Guard. To the repeated suggestions that the time had come when the paper ought to ‘notice’ films, ‘C. P.’ having consulted the Old Guard, replied that it could not be done because, ‘if we did, they are so bad we should have to attack them,’ which indeed, eventually ‘we’ did, thereby moving angry managers to withdraw their advertisements. When it was proposed that particulars should be given of important books which were about to be published, he was advised that either such notes would express an opinion about the books, in which case they would amount to an additional review, or they would not, and then they would be merely publishers’ ‘puffs’. It was not ‘C. P.’ who, when new features attractive to women were advocated, sternly hoped that there was ‘going to be something in them to interest an intelligent woman,’ nor was it he who, when the greater use of photographs was discussed, exclaimed ‘Good God! Must we come to photographs of weddings?’ He was ready to modernise the paper, consistently with its character, in order to increase its usefulness. He did not despair of leading Philistines up to the City of Zion. He never feared that they might weaken the fibre of the paper; he was too confident that he could weaken theirs. He would go firmly as far as he was persuaded was necessary on a long view, but no further. It was urged on him that the building should bear the name of the paper in an illuminated sky-sign. At last he agreed. ‘Very well,’ he said, ‘have it—but don’t let it wink, John.’<sup>1</sup>

Since the paper was critical, independent, and in frequent opposition to popular opinion, he felt that everything should be done to make it clear to the average man and

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Scott.



woman. It was to appeal to the intelligent rather than to the erudite. He tried to keep out of it the pedantic and obscure, pretence and ostentation. He liked plain English, holding that everything in a foreign language, living or dead, that crept into the paper could have been said as well or better in English. ('Why do they say "portfolio" when they mean an English "Ministry"?) He constantly asked the question, 'What does it mean?' or 'What does he mean?' If a man who had allowed something unintelligible to appear in the paper said 'I thought it meant so-and-so,' 'C. P.' would forgive the greatest stupidity, but to insert anything without having a clear opinion, however wrong, about its meaning, was a serious offence. 'But, my dear fellow, if you didn't think you knew what it meant, you shouldn't have let it in.' He would go bustling into a room, waving a cutting or a proof, in which was an obscure phrase, a preciosity or an Americanism. 'What does he mean by this? He talks about a "final showdown"?' An Americanism, I suppose. What does it mean? Generally known? . . . I don't know it. Taken from cards? I never heard of it.' He resented, except in a few cases, the use of initials, especially in headlines, to represent some body with which the journalist might be familiar and the public not. He carried this objection far. For a long time after the railway amalgamations he would not allow L.M.S. to appear in a headline. He had found it at the top of a Short Leader. He came in, according to his custom,<sup>1</sup> bristling. 'These letters L.M.S.,' he said, 'What do they mean?' The amalgamations were recalled to him. 'May be,' he said, 'but what do the letters stand for?' 'A combination, Mr Scott, of the London North-Western . . . ' 'Ah,' he said, relaxing, 'That explains it. I always went North-Western and I can never think of it by any other name.' What was intended to be intelligible to the public, in a leader, a report, a telegram, or a poster, must be intelligible to him, an admirable standard of measure since he never pretended to be a know-all but was unsurpassed in clear thinking and expression.

<sup>1</sup> 'More suo' not permitted.

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The slovenliness in language which, partly because of loose thinking, partly because of mere misuse of words, threatens to infest a newspaper, roused him. ‘Look at this,’ he said. ‘Blank died literally in harness. He didn’t.’ Or, ‘This man says that we shall have to pay literally through the nose. He knows we shan’t.’ He protested almost passionately against a witness at an inquest who described himself as having been ‘only too willing’ to save a woman from drowning. ‘He doesn’t mean that, you know,’ said ‘C. P.’ ‘Then why does he say it?’ He watched for and cut out of the paper false usages and vulgarisms. He sent the cutting sometimes to the culprit, more often to one of his assistants for what he called the ‘little collection’. He would not allow misuses in reports and contributions to be justified by the distinction of either Cabinet rank or a University Chair. Drawing attention to a lapse by a well-known master of letters, he said, ‘Even the great can stumble—but it should have been altered.’ He demanded a certain precision and dignity of language; all parts of the paper, reports and letters to editor included, had to conform to it. He was fastidious about translations, especially from the French, a language to which he gave exact attention. He was impatient with writers of letters who complained when English grammar was forcibly imposed on them. ‘They ought to be grateful to us,’ he said, ‘as speakers should be to reporters.’ His vigilance extended to the smallest points. If Mr Lloyd George was ‘Mr George’ in the leader-columns, that was the precision of ‘C. P.’, not, as Mr George is reported to have said, the malice of Labour men gathered on the *Guardian* staff.

‘C. P.’ demanded correct English in the common words and phrases. Someone had said ‘the extremists have now neither the money, backing, or confidence to launch a new programme.’ ‘Should be “nor”,’ wrote ‘C. P.’, ‘but wrong even so, as “neither” implies only two alternatives.’ He had a nose for outrages on the participle. Cutting out a paragraph which said: ‘An aeroplane made a forced landing on the Goodwin Sands yesterday, the pilot and two passengers being picked up by a passing steamer,’ he noted

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“‘Being” here implies some relation of cause and effect and there is none.’ He never ceased to point out the improper use of the personal pronoun, as in ‘I can vouch for them being uncomfortable.’ ‘Should be “their”,’ he said curtly. ‘He agreed to them being removed to Australia’; ‘should be “their”,’ he wrote. ‘Lord Rosebery’s remark about it being easy to talk when one had a contempt for one’s audience’—‘should be “its”,’ he said, and so on through a hundred other vulgar errors like ‘very gratified’, ‘some form or another,’ ‘equally . . . as,’ ‘cruel or otherwise.’ As the errors had all been committed by some individual in the editorial departments, ‘C. P.’ was puzzled. He desired to bring the niceties of correct usage to the general notice, but not to do anything which might pillory an individual. ‘Could one suggest,’ he asked, ‘any easy method by which correction of the “little errors” could be made generally available without offence?’ A method was possible, and he agreed to it, as the statesmen say, in principle. But, like them, he did nothing. He could be stern in his private rebukes; a Chief Reader, summoned to an interview on misprints and recommended by a friend not to defend the indefensible, went away murmuring, ‘He’s a hard man if you give in to him.’ But ‘C. P.’ shied from the instruction which, if made ‘generally available’, might here and there be read as a public censure. To the end he continued to send the little notes, pinning the cutting at the top of a scrap of paper. But he never wrote, much less circulated, a Book of Leviticus. Sometimes he held a nightly inquisition into misprints, which led a shocked conference to discover that the correction of a comma is the root of much typographical evil. Thereupon battle. Did commas matter? Yes, but did they ‘really’ matter? Should one regulate them by grammar or by rude common-sense, fight for each jot and tittle of a punctuative creed or take what one was given in fear of a worse fate? It became a war of exhaustion, broken by the armistice of summer holidays, and not renewed.

In many small ways ‘C. P.’ took pains to spare the personal feelings of others. Once, having given someone charge

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of an important feature, he decided that the experiment was unsuccessful. He sent to a senior the original ‘copy’ which showed the changes made by the reviser, with the comment, ‘Miles better in the original.’ Then, although he put someone else in charge, the dispossessed received from him a note which gave no sign of dissatisfaction. He thought that this was a promising young man who should not be discouraged. To individuals, except to those with whom he came in close contact, he rarely gave direct commendation for a good piece of work. He thought of work as its own reward (but journalists are human), so that although he noticed and in conversation spoke of good performance, he seldom conveyed his praise to those who sometimes wondered, without cause, whether their work was appreciated by him. Some of his commendations, for their rarity, entered the office traditions. On ceremonial occasions, anxious to thank the editorial departments for their common effort, he could not conceal his view of the gulf which separated the writer, the creator of opinion, from the purveyor of news; if all the writers were suddenly missing, he more than once said, ‘Even the sub-editors would be able to knock up some sort of a leader.’

He was slow to give his confidence, and had a long memory for disappointments. Whether it was the case of a new man coming for trial as a writer or of anyone in the office being appointed to a new duty, he followed his work from day to day and plied him with comment and criticism. If, finally, he ever reached the phrase, ‘Oh, you can say—’ or ‘You can do what you like about it,’ the recipient knew that even if ‘C. P.’ did not mean quite that, he was completely trusted. It has been said that he chose men well. Certainly he almost always chose them with great caution. When a vacancy had to be filled without delay, he weighed specimens of work, records, and personal impressions and called subordinates into council. He liked specimens; he thought that from even one or two you could generally get an idea of a man’s quality, whereas an interview, though necessary, was treacherous; it might leave you with a wrong impression or, annoyingly, with

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none at all. Of candidates for the writing staff he held that it did not matter how long a vacancy was kept open provided that, at the finish, it was rightly filled. If a valuable man was lost to the staff, his work could be divided out among the remainder until a suitable successor had been discovered, tested, and finally confirmed. It was unfortunate, no doubt, for the remainder, if the time was long, but that was irrelevant; it might be years, and on one occasion was. Of all alike he said, 'You see, we have to be careful, because we can't get rid of them.' He was behind the times of easy-come and easy-go. He expected letters of recommendation to be serious, and he weighed them seriously. They did not always help the applicant. He read out one, pausing over each paragraph and sometimes commenting, until he came to the sentence, 'and he is a brilliant conversationalist.' 'I think,' said 'C. P.', 'that we have enough of them already.'

He held the strictest views about the function of editor. For him the Editor was the personality, controlling, directing, harmonising, which gave unity of purpose and of character to the paper. He was not equally interested in all parts; he left the Commercial to the commercial; he rarely looked at the sports pages; news never excited him like an idea. But he felt so strongly that the organism, if it was to be a consistent whole, must reflect a single personality, that he objected not only to the existence of self-sufficing departments but also to the conferment of the title of 'Editor,' either by day or by night, on anybody charged with a feature or a department. 'Night-editor?' he said wonderingly, having at that time himself been night-editor as well as Editor for nearly fifty years. 'Ah, but of course, we don't have that system here.' He wrote 'London Manager,' not 'London Editor' for the head of the London Office. He would say 'my assistant' but not 'assistant editor.' He referred not to 'sports editor' but to 'sports sub-editor.' When a list of all the 'editors' on a great New York daily was read out to him, he was much amused, and said, 'I wonder what on earth they all find to do.' His rule was that all letters written by members of the

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staff must be signed on behalf of the Editor with their initials only. He rejected the suggestion that a reference should be given at the head of letters which would bring the answer direct to the right person; the reply should be addressed to the Editor and find its way to its personal destination through normal, even though devious, office channels. There is but one God, and Allah is his prophet. ‘C. P.s’ idea of an editor was that he had both functions.

The news which he despised was that which resounds without significance. When a paragraph appeared in the paper saying that the Honourable Somebody had been operated on for appendicitis by Sir Frederick Treves, he sent a cross note saying that it should not have been given, because ‘(i) The Honourable Somebody is nobody; (ii) All these people have appendicitis nowadays; (iii) Sir Frederick Treves operates on all of them.’ He was displeased with the sentimental gush about the Queen’s Doll House. He appreciated, without himself pursuing, the journalistic ‘scoop’; some time after a large ‘scoop’ had been fortuitously obtained, he remarked that it would be ‘very useful’ to the news columns if we could have another. He kept ‘copy’ late on his desk to the distraction of the sub-editors, and, apologising when at last he released it, did the same next night. On most modern papers he would have been ‘sacked’ repeatedly, he had such ideas about news-values. There was an evening when it was announced that *The Times* had come down to a penny. E. T. Scott, who was then his secretary, went to see the news editor. ‘My father wants to know how much we are giving about *The Times* at a penny.’ ‘I thought about a quarter of a column,’ was the reply. ‘E. T. S.’ looked gloomy. ‘I don’t think he will regard that as enough.’ In a few moments the news editor was summoned to ‘C. P. S.’, who was sitting magisterially. ‘Oh, X,’ he said, ‘how much are we giving about *The Times* coming down to a penny?’ ‘A quarter of a column, Mr Scott.’ He shook his beard. ‘It’s not nearly enough,’ he said, ‘we ought to have at least a column. If the news had come in earlier it would have

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been the subject for the Long.' When he said, as he sometimes did, 'Now what can we do to strengthen ourselves against *The Times*?' his news editor could have made a suggestion to him. But it would have made no difference, for he was magnanimous.

Some editors, it is said, get news for their papers; a man may be a Dinner Editor, so that what goes into his tentacular ears comes out in his paper next morning. 'C. P.' kept his paper and his private information distinct. He scarcely ever gave his own paper a piece of news; rarely would he allow it even to prepare for something he had heard was about to happen. He would not use any information which had come to him as a private person for the purposes of his paper. He made men despair. One night he came abruptly into a room. 'Have we anything ready,' he said, 'about J. L. Paton?' 'No, Mr Scott—is he dead?' 'No, no, he's resigned the High Mastership. I knew a fortnight ago.' Sometimes he overreached himself. Once he brought along the usual cutting; it referred to a public man in Manchester who had been the subject of controversy for years. 'Why did we criticise him like this?' he said, looking vexed. 'Well but, Mr Scott, we've said pretty much the same thing about him for two or three years.' 'I know, I know,' he said, 'but I've spent the last three months trying to get him round to a better frame of mind, and I had just succeeded.' Sometimes he went to London to see Personages. When he came back he might mention some of the things that had been said to him, and occasionally it seemed to his listeners, who were impartial men, that something in the information might even have been intended by the Personage to see the morning light. The comedy had a set form. 'Don't you think, Mr Scott, that something of this ought to be indicated in the news columns—I mean in order to give it its proper importance—or perhaps in the London Letter?' 'C. P.' would appear to think over this suggestion. After a time he would say, 'I think, perhaps, on the whole, it had better be kept for the Leader. I'm just going to write.'

† Then High Master of the Manchester Grammar School.

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Then he wrote the Leader, and the profane, seizing the First Edition to see what he had done, would swear that neither Personage nor public would ever find the embedded news. During the war he often went to London. There was one week-end when he went on the Friday and returned on the Monday. On Monday morning a full summary of an exciting document appeared in a London paper. In the evening this was shown to him. He pored over it with recognition and named a well-known journalist. ‘That’s X,’ he said. ‘When I went to see Z yesterday’—he named a Personage—‘X was just coming out of his room. He had a copy of this report under his arm.’ Beaming on his outraged assistants he added, ‘I had a copy too.’ Personages must have wept at his loyalty to confidence.

He sought for solid quality in the matter that went into the paper. Being thrifty and determined to have reasonable value for money, he tried to catch contributors young, before others had detected their quality and their prices had risen. He watched the reviews which the paper printed, took notice of new, promising authors, instructed his staff to draw his attention to any new contributor who ought to be encouraged. The system, which grew up in the newspapers during the war, of paying popular novelists large sums to pronounce on any question shocked him. When he was told that one of them was paid forty guineas an article he said with great energy, ‘But he’s not worth it!’ The most popular contributor did not attract him if the contribution did not. A famous man of letters offered for a bagatelle some signed speculations on post-war Europe. ‘C. P.’, not liking their trend, rejected them and the great man wrote pleasantly, saying that he had placed them elsewhere for a hundred guineas. In administration he had Gladstone’s hate of waste. Someone at a conference referred to the prevalence of waste in the office. ‘Waste!’ said ‘C. P.’, looking like Jove when all Olympus trembled at his nod, ‘how can there be waste?’ He threw his head back, brushing his beard up and up from beneath and darting sideways glances at the other. ‘Waste of stationery,’



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was suggested. 'Waste of stationery!' he repeated with indignation. 'But where?' He turned to the editorial hierarchs. 'What is the system by which we get our stationery?' He was mollified when assured that one could scarcely get a postcard without filling up a form.

While 'C. P.' watched the 'feeders' that led from without to the features of the paper, he stimulated his staff with suggestions from his widely-ranging mind. He must have sent down to them tens of thousands of notes, crisp and shrewd, on the topics of the day or the day after, from the threepenny-bit to the bicycle, from whatnots to salaries for wives, from home-baking to Yugo-Slavia and food-rationing by ticket:

*June 11, 1911*

This estimate relating to home-baking from stone-milled flour seems rather important. I wonder if we could get someone to write with knowledge on the extent to which home-baking is still carried on among the poor and as to the instruction of girls at the technical schools in baking. Home baking is certainly very much commoner in the north of England than in the south. I never had a cook yet who could not bake and didn't expect to do so; whereas in the south my friends tell me it is practically a lost art. The whole thing would make a good back-pager if we could get the right person to do it.

*January 11, 1917*

It is a large order to break up the Austrian Empire and to reconstruct the fragments. We shall have pretty carefully to count the cost as well as the practical gain. Would a Southern Slav State, I wonder, hold together? These smaller Slavonic nationalities seem to have a wonderful capacity for fighting each other.

*February 5, 1917*

In view of the possible imminence of 'rationing' how would it be for someone to write an article giving the most precise information obtainable as to its working in Germany and Austria-Hungary? I believe the system of tickets

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to be entirely unsuited to our needs, and that the rationing could be far better done by a system of local committees to whom a pretty free hand as to methods should be given and with some discretionary power. If everyone were obliged to select a particular butcher, or baker, or grocer, and the tradesmen had to keep a strict account, the whole business could be done without the intolerable nuisance of tickets or queues.

If occasionally he was excited on discovering things which were not new, it was one side of a cardinal journalistic virtue, but sometimes he insisted that the discovery should be immediately shared by his readers. The announcement that the Manchester Corporation, determined to abate the smoke-nuisance, was now hiring out gas-cookers to rate-payers had to be delicately transmuted into a sketch of the progress made by a long-established piece of municipal machinery up to the point which was now triumphantly disclosed, and after ‘C. P.’ had paid an enthusiastic but belated visit to ‘the dogs’, the paper indulged itself in grave appreciation of the æsthetic beauties of a scene which, as a sordid stimulant of gambling, it had for some time damned.

‘C. P.’ encouraged the use of maps in the news-columns. He looked out for the Pointer and the Scale, compared the distances in the news-columns with those in the map, though it might be a small map of a large country, and wrote a note if he thought there was anything wrong. If a Leader contained much geography he might have a map specially drawn and inserted somewhere else. When it was suggested that a one-column map might just as well be dropped into the actual Leader, he smiled without warmth; one should not jig about the Ark. He grew to be fond of illustrations. In their early days they had been regarded as a comforter for baby-readers, as a little ‘cheap’; hence, for self-respect, drawings were used rather than half-tone photographs. Later, in a changed world ‘C. P.’ would agree, for the joke, that some readers might even look at the illustrations before the Leaders; why, he did it himself in the

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case of *The Times* but, of course, that was different. He watched the pictures jealously because they were 'so prominent.' He did not like photographs of 'disasters'. Whereas, thirty years ago, he had printed hunting articles to interest hunting people, his views had changed so much that at the end he would not give a photograph of a meet, however good. He disliked the conventional in photography. 'All these football pictures,' he said, 'are exactly alike.' He complained that if photographers 'took' a golfer when driving, they always showed the end instead of the beginning of the swing. They must, he said, be told to change their ways; but he yielded when assured that a photographer clicking his camera just when one of the most sensitive creatures was about to drive would be as good as dead. To caricatures he never fully reconciled himself. For a special purpose, for a short time, as at an election, they might be tolerable, but since as he said, 'they hit you in the face', he suspected them. The sense of proportion which he prized they lacked.

To his staff he was courteous and suave, with an absolute authority. Those under his eye he ruled with an almost military discipline but he did not like it said so. To men occupying new posts he made clear his desire that the machine should run without friction, and what he desired he assumed. He directed by tone as much as by word. If he said 'It is important that there should be no friction . . .' it was enough. As he grew old he could not tolerate the loud and truculent; he protected himself against them by not seeing them. He welcomed criticism, the threshing of ideas, the opposition of independent minds. 'X is weak,' he said. 'He proposes something and, when you object, agrees with all you say.' He believed so much in the goodness of human nature that he could be taken in by private and public humbugs. When the Germans first dropped bombs on undefended places he would not believe it; on the ground that there must be defences of which the Germans knew, he sent people to look for them.

He had a stock of euphemisms. Acts of insubordination were 'irregular', the worst 'most irregular'. A person with

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whom nothing could be done 'had to go'. He told of a colleague who, in the 1870's, would not produce reports as the young 'C.P.', the new editor, wanted them. 'Eventually,' he summed up brightly, 'he had to go.' He never completely trusted anyone whom he had once detected by sight, sound, or smell, to have taken alcohol in excess. One night when he was in the room of a junior, the door opened stealthily and in the aperture appeared a large flushed face, whose owner,<sup>1</sup> looking fixedly for some seconds at 'C. P.', said with solemnity, 'It's all right, Mr Scott.' 'C. P.' regarded him without speaking. The intruder, his face bathed in benevolence, repeated, 'It's all right, Mr Scott,' and as stealthily withdrew. 'C. P.', his head thrust forward and bristling like a well-bred dog, glared at the closed door. Then he said 'He's been drinking. He'll have to go.' To 'have to go' was the regular verb in which he conjugated the ultimate sentence. Later the culprit 'went', though another reason was given him. No one could despatch the silken bow-string with more courtesy than 'C. P.'

Letter-writing was to him a subtle instrument through which to convey the nicest shades of purpose. He was a master of the art, from silences to plainest speech. He worked on an important letter as on a leader or a review, seeking the just word, demanding a subordinate's criticism, looking like a chess-player to the moves beyond the next, drafting and redrafting. No one wrote with more intention. A novice pointed out to him, when he had written a careful reply to an important letter, that he had not answered one of the principal paragraphs. 'Well, no,' he said with a smile, 'you see, that is the answer. He'll understand.' He could convey a warning in an ambiguity and by silence procure a resignation. He preferred the flexibility of letters to the brusqueness of the telegram. He desired others to write as he did, to the point. He could not do with wordy letters or memoranda, and often did not read them. 'Another long screed from X!' he would say, 'let me know what he says'—and 'Would you read this for me and tell me if I ought to answer personally.' It was alleged

<sup>1</sup> Now dead.

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that one man had fought a winning battle against 'C. P.'s' critical notes by a counter-bombardment with lengthy memoranda.

Himself scrupulous in answering letters, 'C. P.' expected his staff to be so. If anyone wrote complaining that an earlier letter had not been adequately treated, 'But it was, of course, acknowledged?' he asked. The only letters which he ignored were those which he called 'ill-conditioned' and 'impossible'. He would send a letter on with a note 'An ill-conditioned screed! Read and destroy!' or 'An impossible fellow! Better just file.' He was generous to all who had a reasonable point of view to put forward in the correspondence columns; newspapers being almost a monopoly, the public must be granted its voice. But he would not allow the display of ill-temper which the correspondence columns of a newspaper attract. For this reason he was slow to ventilate theological and ecclesiastical questions. He feared the ill-temper of the bickering sects, some of whom, though he always kept the balance even between them, complained each that he favoured another. There were those who, if a paragraph were dropped in the nightly scurry out of a 24-page paper, thought that he was conspiring against their faith, if faith it was. He was patient, but he abstained from giving them occasions. He rejected more than once a suggestion that the paper should have a series of articles summarising the recent course of the Higher Criticism at home and abroad. 'They' would be up in arms. 'But, Mr Scott, if the writer only described the theories of the critics without pronouncing on them, they could not well protest.' 'Oh yes,' he said, 'they would. They would want to know why we were doing it.' In religious discussion, like that of the Prayer Book, he kept the writing in his own hands. He was surprised, as well as pleased, when at last he found a substitute on the staff to satisfy him.

Those who knew 'C. P.' only in his later years spoke of his defective memory. But it had always been so, nor was it defective so much as capricious. One day a subordinate reported himself on return from holiday. 'Ah, my dear

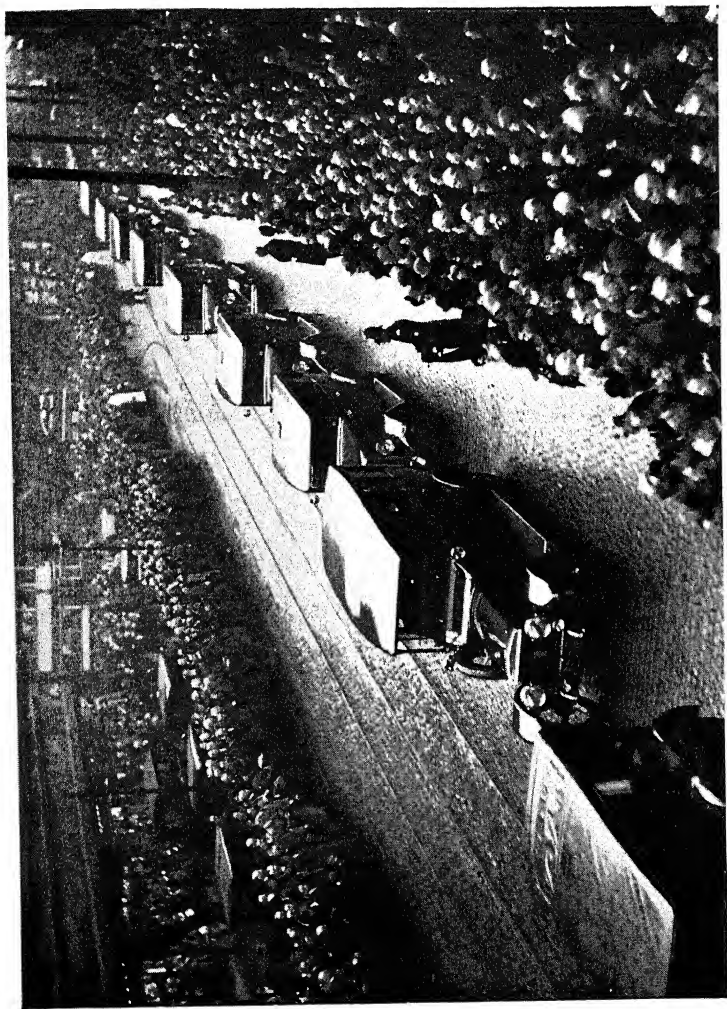
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fellow,' said 'C. P.', 'back from holiday? Have you had a good time?' 'Yes, thank you, Mr Scott.' 'Where have you been?' 'I've been down in Kent.' 'Among the hop-fields?' 'Right in the middle of them.' 'And did you do any hopping?' On the next night, at the same time, the subordinate waited on 'C. P.' 'Ah, my dear fellow,' he said cordially, 'back from holiday? Have you had a good time?' 'Yes, thank you, Mr Scott.' 'Where have you been?' 'I've been down in Kent.' 'Among the hop-fields?' and so on to the end of the kind interrogation, with no ripple from yesterday's existence troubling his serenity. That was when he was at the height of his powers. He forgot names and faces easily. 'Who is that?' he said when a man who had been two or three years in the office passed him. 'X? Ah, a newcomer, I suppose. I think I haven't come across him yet.' His forgetfulness was, perhaps, partly self-protective. He remembered what mattered by forgetting what did not. If no one knew what he might forget, no one was certain what he would not remember, nor did lapses of memory impede the powerful working of his mind.

There was a character on a famous football field who, when he made an assertion, confirmed it solemnly by saying, 'an' no bettin'.' 'C. P.' was an editor 'an' no bettin'.' He thought of the paper as possessing, in whole and in part, a character which nothing must diminish. The character safe, anything might be changed. He himself read slowly, wrote slowly, made up his mind slowly, but he was tremendously right when his mind was made up. Serene in spirit, he strengthened any who were rudely shaken by the inevitable mishaps of newspaper work. Courage and composure did not fail him. He was, as the Teutons said of the Romans, 'invincible, not to be overcome by any blow.' As such a man he is remembered by the generations of those who gladly served him, from the days of his prime to the later years when, white and bowed, but still with fresh, clear mind, still inspiring and directing with the old fire, he hurried with quick shuffling steps along the corridors, and so to the last months when sometimes,

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his son absent, he 'took Leaders' and sat long over the fire, holding some piece of 'copy' in his hand, his mind far away but trying still to respond to each new call on his attention, grave and cheerful, firm and courteous, a greater journalist and a greater man than his staff had known or will know.



The funeral in Manchester





## CHAPTER XVIII

### CHARACTERISTICS

'To every man of twenty,' said Taine, 'the world is a scandal.' The young Scott was never a man of twenty. If you read his letters or his articles you miss all the qualities that we associate with youth, ardour, impatience, impulsiveness and the illusions that make men

Content to barter short lived pangs  
For a paradise of ages.

Scott had a patient and deliberative mind; he was interested in a problem through his intellect before he was interested in it through his emotions; his natural treatment of any question was the dispassionate analysis of fact and argument. In youth he brought to bear on politics the cold wisdom of mid-day with its hard and level light rather than the dancing rapture of a man for whom

Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills  
Her dew is on the flowers.

This critical deliberate spirit had, of course, no element of cynicism or indifference. On the contrary. The quality in his character that had made him think of becoming a Unitarian minister sent him into public life with a driving sense of duty. Cicero said in his *Republic* that Nature had implanted in the human race so powerful a desire to serve the common welfare that it overcame all the temptations of pleasure and ease. Some would think this too sanguine a description of the world we live in, but it is a true description of the men whose blood and spirit Scott had inherited, and it was specially true of Scott himself. It was indeed, as we shall see later, the secret of his happiness. No man ever had more of the quality that Mr Bevan notes in his account of Alexander's successors in the *House of Seleucus*, as

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the chief gift of the active West to the patient East; a sense that it is a man's duty to find remedies for the wrongs that disfigure the world. The difference between Scott and a Radical like Chamberlain, or a romantic like Shelley was, not that he had less care for human suffering or injustice, but that he brought a more cautious and measured habit of mind to any problem. Where they would have composed a Philippic, he would have composed a Greats Essay.

To this quality, a quality not without its dangers, Scott owed it that he escaped the fate of many reformers. Most men who have been certain and confident in youth lose certainty and confidence as they grow older. The explanation is partly that they are burnt out and exhausted, partly that time robs them of their first strength, but it is partly the melancholy process of disenchantment. 'The worst of the worthy sort of people,' said Voltaire, 'is that they are such cowards. A man groans over wrongs, he shuts his lips, he takes his supper and he forgets.' That is a good description of one kind of defaulter from the great struggles of civilisation. But if there is one man whose spirit flags because he forgets, there is another of whom it may be said that his spirit flags because he remembers. He remembers all the battles he has helped to win only to find that the world seems little better off than it would have been if those battles had been lost. The evils he still encounters look like the evils he thought he had destroyed. The remedies for which he is to give what strength is left to him look like the remedies for which he gave the unabated vigour of his youth. If Mazzini or Garibaldi or Lamartine or Victor Hugo or Kossuth could have returned to the world half a century after they left it, where would they have found the triumphs of which they had dreamt to such splendid purpose? Nature gilds every object for which men struggle, leaving them to find out, after they have gained it, what it is worth. That is why the hour of generous illusion is so often followed by the hour of cynical indifference, why man 'hopes rashly, with disgust as rash recoils'. But this mirage serves its purpose, for it is the hour of generous illusion that saves the world from standing still with all its

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abuses and injustices choking its life. The world wants the young man in a hurry, even if he turns later into the old man who hangs back. But Scott gave the world something that it wants and perhaps finds more rarely, the staying power of the man who, starting with a slow and sober step, gains courage and confidence as he grows older.

For Scott, having missed the spring of wild enchantment, escaped the winter of frozen hope. Few people, reading his cautious and balanced articles in the first years of his life on the *Manchester Guardian* would have believed of him, any more than they would have believed of Gladstone when listening to his speeches in the first years of his life in the House of Commons, that he would become a great prophet of democracy. There was an essential difference between Gladstone's youth and Scott's youth, but their middle years and old age had this in common, that they had found in their experience of life more reason for confidence than for disappointment; whereas men often unlearn the wisdom of generosity as they acquire the wisdom of prudence, they exchanged the wisdom of prudence for the wisdom of generosity. Scott was not the man in youth to be tempted by a prospect that looked more hopeful than it was; in old age he was not the man to be dismayed by a prospect that was less forbidding than it seemed.

Now this steady deliberate examining temperament happened to be just what was wanted for Scott's particular task in life. A man with an initiating mind, creative rather than judging and observant, could not have done what Scott did with the *Manchester Guardian*. Scott drew enthusiasm into his paper and then guided it. He used the impulses of original minds without creating an impulsive paper. The men who worked with him when he was making what had been a moderate, cautious, sensible, Liberal paper into the leading moral force in Liberal journalism in Europe, brought great gifts: ideas, enthusiasms, imagination, literary power, and independence of the mere traditions of party or of school. Such fire, left to the men who produce it, is apt to get out of hand, to become a vagrant fire, to spread itself without plan or direction. Under Scott's control this

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fire became a most deadly fire, for it was fire guided and disciplined by a master hand. No paper could have afforded so brilliant a staff of writers had it not possessed an editor whose gifts of courage, of foresight, and of judgment matched their gifts of inspiration. Bolingbroke's saying about a wise statesman, that he considers his administration as a single day in the great year of government, but a day that is affected by those which went before and must affect those that come after, is equally true of a man who presents his ideas day after day in a great newspaper. But the best of writers, like the best of statesmen, may sometimes forget it. Morley used to warn his ardent journalist friends in their youth against letting a paper become a political pamphlet. Scott, using the various gifts of his staff, gave his paper unity, direction, and strength. He made and kept it a paper that men who disliked its warmth had to study for the sake of its light.

This success would not have been possible if Scott had not possessed a mind that was hospitable and generous, as well as deliberative and judicial. Any colleague or person who had a view to put before him could count on a sympathetic hearing. He examined and he weighed, but he never rejected until he had taken the fullest pains to reach a conclusion. This faculty, which so often loses power with advancing age, grew stronger in his case, and whereas many old people shrink from the strange and the new, Scott seemed more and more anxious to make sure that he was not missing some truth of importance and worth. The most cautious of young men, he was the most open-minded of old men. Adventure, as adventure; never found him timid. Tradition, as tradition, had a looser and looser hold on his respect. It was as if, having escaped in early days the temptation to think the problems of life simpler than they are, he found hope in later years in reflecting on the range of remedies that are within the reach of man. Bacon's adaptation of two lines from Ovid exactly describes his outlook.

*Et quoniam variant morbi, variabimus artes;  
Mille mali species, mille salutis erunt.*

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He was not an original man, striking into flame sparks that others had not noticed, by the force of his imagination, but he was a generous man, able to take fire from the ideas of others, and to use that fire with the collected power that a firm habit of self-restraint creates.

Scott's own writing showed the effects of this change in his outlook. His early articles are written in careful English, and they put views and arguments that are significant and sometimes subtle, but their force suffers from their caution. There is too much balance; too much adjustment; too much of a disposition to fall back upon patience and delay; too much readiness to put a good thing into cold storage. Any man would be a wiser man for reading them next morning, but he would not be a more ardent man for they lack mobilising power. After 1914 Scott took to writing a great many leaders. His staff was scattered, and his most brilliant colleague was in the trenches. In one respect these articles resemble his earlier articles, for they are written on the assumption that governed Scott's life. He believed that any person he met should be treated, not as an excitable, but as a reasonable person. But if this quality persists, the later articles have a force and ease, a movement, a sense of purpose which his earlier articles lack. They could make a man ardent and not merely sensible.

A paper does not become a great moral leader if it has behind it nothing more than intellectual strength. The most delicate taste in language, the surest sense of proportion, the quickest grasp of the character and details of a problem, the readiest perception of quality in the writing and thinking of others, these things make a good paper but they do not necessarily create a great force. Nobody reflecting on all that Scott accomplished could fail to see that there was some secret of character which gave his career its integrity and power. Nobody could come close to the man himself, whether in life or work, without learning what that secret was. It can best be described in the language that Bacon used of Antoninus Pius, to whom he attributed a mind exceedingly tranquil and serene because it was 'in no ways charged or incumbered, either with fears, remorse, or

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scruples'. To understand Scott it is necessary to understand in what sense those words were true of him.

Many men, seeking to leave their mark on the life of the world, are disabled or hampered by anxieties, some of them personal, others public. In some men, personal ambition wears away the moral independence that they need for the full use of their power. The course of their public life is haunted on this account by chagrins, misgivings, changes of temperature, moments of elation followed by moments of despair. Even men who enter public life with a single-minded devotion to great causes cannot always escape this fate. They take their characters and their reputations on to a public stage, and they cannot forget how strong a light falls upon them. Their religion, their philosophy, their experience of life may all tell them that a man can only find peace if he can lose himself, but they are thrown into a world where everything pushes them before a mirror. Who has not known the man who is unhappy when he is in the light because he is doubtful what kind of figure he is making, and unhappy when he is out of the light because exile and obscurity turn the air about him cold?

All his life Scott was free from this embarrassment. There was a profound truth in a passage which occurs in a letter that he wrote to his father on February 26, 1871.

I cannot tell you, my dear dad, how happy it makes me to feel that I have a great and noble field of work before me, where I may fail or may succeed as failure and success are counted, but where at least I can go on without doubt or fear knowing that if I am faithful all is well. This, no doubt, is true of life always and everywhere, but one is able to realise its truth more deeply when one's immediate objects lie outside oneself, when personal success, however legitimate, makes up but a very small instead of a very large part of one's hope for the immediate future.

There are many who, had they spoken like this about themselves, would have been suspected of affectation. Nobody who knew Scott would have failed to see that he was never

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more himself. He merged all his personal ambition and pride throughout his life in the *Manchester Guardian*, and he regarded his paper not as his own creation but as the creation of a number of minds working and deliberating together. He knew that others contributed qualities that he lacked; that Montague had a more original mind; Hobhouse a more trenchant mind; Arnold a more enterprising mind. He felt towards the *Manchester Guardian* as a great civil servant feels towards the department that he guides and administers. For this was his view of a paper, that it was not a commercial enterprise, nor a party organ, but a great public institution. This helped to take and keep his mind off those questions of personal fame and personal popularity which vex and distract public men and weaken their force.

A public man may succeed in subduing this spirit, or at least in subordinating it, and yet suffer acute and disabling anxieties of another sort. It is his business to take decisions, and often to take decisions on questions of immense importance, questions where a mistake may involve not only one country but several, not only the world of to-day but the world of to-morrow. Of course, men who take responsibility again and again become hardened, and this is right and proper, for, if good and sensitive men refuse to take responsibility, all power falls into the hands of men who are neither. Some again acquire a cynical view, holding that in a world so uncertain and capricious as ours appears to be you can never tell of two events which is the better and which is the worse. If something appears to go wrong you need not feel remorse, just as the pilot in the *Gorgias* felt no pride when everything went right. For though he had brought his passengers all the way from Egypt to the Piræus for a few drachmas, he gave himself no airs because he did not know which of them he had benefited and which he had injured by saving them from the sea. Or again, a man may find peace by exhausting his capacity for discomfort in the struggle to make a decision, as Burke, after describing the pain he suffered before his breach with Fox, compared himself, when his decision had been taken, to Æneas, after he had taken his decision to leave Dido.



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*Æneas celsa in puppi, jam certus eundi  
Carpebat somnos.*

In all these ways habit or atmosphere may ease that sense of responsibility which seems so intolerable a burden to the man who throws his mind over history, and sees how often a different turn at this point or at that might have guided the world past some precipice.

To be steeped in this atmosphere in youth is obviously an immense advantage for a public man. Scott, an editor at twenty-five, was in this respect like an eighteenth century statesman. To understand the length of his public life we might imagine Pitt, who became a Cabinet Minister at the end of the American War in 1783, as still a Cabinet Minister when the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846. If a man cannot learn to throw off care with such a body of experience behind him, he is not fitted for any public position. But those who knew Scott best knew that there was more than habit in that serenity which impressed itself upon all who were with him in times of crisis. It was his religion. The secret of his strength was not merely that he spent his whole life in public affairs, but that he spent his whole life under the influence of a simple moral law. In some respects he was singularly unlike the man who has passed through a religious conversion, for no man was less disposed to draw a sharp line between those with his own outlook on life and those with another. But he had all the peace and strength of a man whose mind had been made up once and for all on fundamental questions. This was due, he used to say, to one book. As a youth he found in Seeley's *Ecce Homo* guidance and comfort that led him and sustained him to the end of his life. Few men have had a view of duty so simple, direct, and reassuring. His conscience told him that he should give the best of his mind to the problem before him, and then pass to his next task, without letting himself be distracted or disabled by 'fears, remorse, or scruples'. His friend and doctor, Mrs Atkinson, described a conversation with him on the subject of George Borrow.

I remember when discussing George Borrow he said he

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could not understand that 'drifting' attitude to life—and he could not understand people who could not make up their mind as to a course of action. I forget how the conversation came round to this—I think I said something about 'Worrying for days over a decision and then worrying after it was made as to its wisdom.'

Mr Scott said—'Never do that. It is a waste of energy, and interferes with clear judgment. When I am forced to make a difficult decision, I think it over quietly—weigh up all the facts, consider the rights and wrongs of the case, and come to a decision. I never worry afterwards about the difficulties, because when, after a considered judgment I have come to a decision, I allow nothing to alter it, and that is the end.'

What he thought on religion and duty when first he stepped into the office of the *Manchester Guardian* he thought as an old man in the dusk of his life. A letter that he wrote to Lady Boyd Dawkins a few weeks before his death might have been written fifty years earlier.

October 18, 1931

MY DEAR MARY,

I'm so glad you've been having an interesting time. For us outsiders it is a little difficult to apply our minds with ardour to the unsolved problems of existence. For me, I confess, the question of first causes is not interesting, because it is essentially insoluble. The 'mystery of life' is indeed a mystery, partly, no doubt, because we don't know what life is. But at least we can trace some of the forms of life on this terrestrial globe, and few things can be more fascinating than the investigation. The one thing we know directly—by intuition, as they say—is our own existence, and yet when we ask ourselves 'What am I?' no answer is forthcoming. But you will have had enough and too much of philosophising, or attempts at it. After all one falls back on the practical life—activity, affection . . .

Activity, affection: these two words summed up his life. Perhaps the order should be reversed, for the intensity of his

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affection was the fiercest test of his obedience to his view of duty. At sixty he suffered what must have seemed to those who knew him best the kind of blow from which men never quite recover. His devotion to his wife was so absorbing that it was difficult for his friends to imagine his life without her. The loss of his wife, and the loss, two years later, of his eldest son were wounds that would have been mortal if he had not been able to meet sorrow by something higher than courage. He met it by his religion of duty. Lord Kilbracken tells us that Gladstone held that a man who lets sorrow disable him for his duty acts the part of a coward. Scott held the same view. In his judgment to flag or to falter in your task, in your resolution to meet all the demands of life without flinching, was to let something less than duty guide and control your steps. He still owed to the world all that God had given him of power, tenacity, resilience. Shock and misery could never make him talk or look or think like a wounded man.

Scott's courage in bearing sorrow was thus of the same quality as his courage in bearing misfortune of any other kind. Nobody could be with him without learning that he was incapable of fear. So true was this that he could hardly be called a brave man if brave implies struggle. He was rather fearless than brave. He had the stoic feeling towards life. Some brave men who have to face unpopularity for their opinions brace themselves for the ordeal, but Scott acted so habitually on the assumption that any loss of his self-respect would be worse than anything else that could happen to him, that there was no effort or strain in his conduct.

On one occasion a man whom he esteemed wrote a letter of which one sentence seemed to asperse the integrity of the *Manchester Guardian*. Scott wrote to ask him whether this was the construction he wished his language to bear and the writer answered at once that it was not. 'Many thanks for your letter,' wrote Scott in reply, 'I wouldn't have troubled you only that the last words of your letter appeared to reflect a charge which is being made up and down the place by people less generous than yourself, and would undoubtedly have been taken by them as an encouragement to their in-

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jurious opinion. I don't care a button for what stupid or malicious people may say or think, but as to one's friends that is quite a different matter.' Many a man thinks, mistakenly, that he does not care a button about what stupid or malicious people may say of him, but Scott's whole bearing and conduct showed that when he said this he was making no mistake about himself. Men who worked with him sometimes thought his conclusions wrong; they might disagree with his estimates of men, or his judgments on events. But the one thing of which they were all certain was that in deciding how to act or what to say he treated the risks of private or public displeasure with an Olympian indifference.

Scott's calm courage rested on his view of the relations of man's life to 'the unsearchable immensities of God's realm.' That view he put himself in two letters written to Mrs Lejeune when he was under the shadow of great public and private anxiety.

*March 9, 1918*

. . . What a lovely day! Somehow the peace and beauty of nature seems to make more poignant the sense of the destruction and the wickedness that is going on. And what if our task should prove too hard for us? It would seem like the denial of God. But one has always to remember how vast are the spaces of history and how sure its revenges, and that in the end it is always the spiritual forces which prevail.

But what a need for patience and for faith—and fortitude!

*March 16, 1918*

. . . Of course you're quite right that there is no relation between righteousness and success for nations any more than for individuals (I meant to have talked about this, but forgot!). In a very real sense—the deepest—righteousness is success. Yet taking the sum of things, is there not something in Matthew Arnold's definition of God (based on the prophets) as 'the Power not Ourselves that makes for Righteousness'? (See M. A.'s *God and the World*).

Anyway, if I thought that on the whole the stream of

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things was towards progressive evil, I should feel it was a Devil's world rather than God's. That is what I meant when I said—foolishly, of course—that the world might seem emptied of God. It might for the moment. But what is a war, what is a generation of men in the sum of things? Whole civilisations have perished, yet man has gone forward. Millions of years have made us what we are. We shall not fail because Germany annexes a few provinces and militarism carries all before it for a time in Germany. We shall only be nerved to greater efforts, and righteousness will have its upholders in Germany also.

To understand the full force and significance of Scott's power of putting all that concerned himself and his age *sub specie æternitatis*, we must remember the character of the occupation in which he spent his life. A journalist lives, more than anybody else, from day to day, from hour to hour. The debates and controversies to which he gives his mind may pass from great issues to small, from storms in the heavens to storms in a tea-cup, for they are subject to all the passions, impulses, and surprises of party strife. Politics were described by Balfour as organised quarrel, and organised quarrel cannot always remain spontaneous and sincere, free from tactics and intrigue. Morley used to say that if a man continued long enough in that life, he unfitted himself for any other. Some journalists, finding themselves in this sea, a sea one day of breakers, another day of bubbles, try to anchor themselves on the eternities by setting aside a few hours every day for creative work or for contemplative study.<sup>1</sup> Scott once told his daughter that he spent half an hour every day in meditation. Apart from this he never put his paper aside. All that he read by day was related to the work of the night. Blue books, Parliamentary papers,

<sup>1</sup> See C. E. Montague's letter of October 5, 1907 to Allan Monkhouse. 'Do keep yourself time, whatever happens, for writing of your own. The paper easily devours all our time, if allowed, but, even in its own interests, it has to be prevented. . . . I make an hour or two for my own use (apart from mere exercise) a first charge on each day, and I do believe it's better for the paper than if it went to doing more reviews.'—C. E. Montague: *a Memoir*, by Oliver Elton, p. 62.

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Hansard, works on the questions of the hour, these were his habitual study. Yet the sheer power of his large faith kept him composed and tranquil in this restless life, with its incessant currents and its perpetual provocations. This spirit gave his paper that quality which impressed the world: its equable and magnanimous temper.

It happened that the circumstances of his time gave to Scott's special qualities an uncommon importance. When he entered on his life's work England was in no sense a democracy. Universal education was just beginning; the long hours of labour left the mass of the people with little leisure, and though the town worker had just received the franchise, political power was in the hands of the prosperous classes. In the course of his life England passed through a revolution. Post-War England, when compared with the England of the seventies, was a society depending largely on the taste, judgment, and sense of the mass of its members over the whole field of life, politics, religion, and culture. Education had created an age not unlike that described by Dr Tarn in his brilliant study of Hellenistic civilisation, with two publics, one highly educated, the other educated enough to read greedily, but not to read seriously. If you can say roughly that the difference between an educated and an uneducated man is that the first can take an intelligent interest in some aspect of life or art, whereas the second can only notice its sensational and exciting phenomena, this new world was exposed to great dangers. For in a society that had only lately come into the enjoyment of leisure, the great mass of whose members had been to school but had left school and put away their books at fourteen, it was more profitable to satisfy the demands of the second type than to stimulate the demands of the first. A sensational Press and a sensational cinema showed that this truth had not been lost on business men with initiative and energy. Rostovtzeff, in concluding his famous study of the social and economic history of the Roman Empire, speculating on the causes of its fall, suggested that when superficial culture is spread far and wide moral and social decay is inevitable. This view would strike most people as extravagant, but other

thinkers and historians have held that when every department of life comes under the control of the mass mind, society is in danger of suffering a serious loss of quality in all its standards of taste and judgment.

This was an alarming portent on the horizon. But there was a second. It happened that at the very time when the electorate sprang from less than ten millions to over twenty, politics had been thrown into confusion by the War. All the traditions of party life were broken; ties created by long years of common effort and common adventure among public men were destroyed; new and bewildering problems came into view. Thus many of the standards that helped to guide the public mind were removed. For the evils of the party system are obvious enough, but it demands and inspires loyalty which is a good thing, and it gives to those who work for its success some reason for holding one idea rather than another. English public life, when it was no longer regulated by the traditions and customs of the two-party system fell inevitably into confusion. The forces by whose influence things hang together in men's minds, taking some kind of consistency or principle or plan, had vanished or lost most of their strength. How was this new electorate to judge whether or not a crude proposal, that seemed at first attractive and salutary, was other than it seemed? New problems had been thrown up for which old formulas seemed irrelevant; parties shifted their ground; public men moved in and out, finding in coalition a bridge to cross and recross frontiers. New political problems, a new electorate, a new manner of life, a new habit of common enjoyment, all these had come at a time when the nation had lost what guidance men can find in the coherent purposes and settled traditions of party.

In this society the *Manchester Guardian* was like a ship riding at anchor in a storm that was carrying everything before it. For Scott assumed that a democracy needs and will accept as high a standard of truth, as steady a light, as serious an aim, as the educated class that had once ruled England. He refused to change the methods and spirit of his paper to meet the demand for excitement. De Tocqueville

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argued that a society gets used to the standards of improvised and imperfect satisfaction when culture spreads from those who have been trained by leisure to expect the best, to those who have been obliged by their circumstances to take what they can get. The reader of the *Manchester Guardian* was still treated as a man capable of an intelligent and consecutive attention, not as a person seeking only distraction and diversion, whether he was concerned with sport or politics, religion or art. Scott refused, that is, to believe that an age which reads greedily cannot be taught to read seriously. The distinguished American writer, Mr Walter Lippmann, once wrote: 'Whenever I have been in the mood to despair about the Press and to wonder whether democratic institutions were workable with the kind of Press that we have, I have come back to the *Guardian* as a living illustration of what character and intelligence can actually do in a commercialised world.'

Not less important was the task the *Manchester Guardian* performed in the distracted world of politics. For amidst the dissolution of parties and party ties it preserved an integrity of judgment and criticism that helped and guided even those who disagreed with its conclusions. New ideas and new projects were considered in a spirit that was independent without being opportunist. In the autumn of 1917 Scott discussed the plans and prospects of the Labour Party with Mr Arthur Henderson, and expounded them with sympathy in a leading article. After the Election of 1918 Mr Arthur Henderson wrote on behalf of the Labour Party to thank Scott for the fairness and hospitality with which the Labour Party had been treated. Scott welcomed whatever the Labour Party had to give of purpose, ardour, or new experience. He was concerned for the spirit rather than the prestige of his own party, and though he held that that party still had work to do for the nation, he was never a party man in the narrow sense of the term. The service he did to political thinking in these years of confusion was that of preserving the habit of responsible criticism. Day by day he reminded the nation that it could not live from hand to mouth, and that its future depended on its capacity for



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large, patient, courageous, and generous ideas. The most significant of all the compliments paid to Scott were the tribute of men who did not share his politics, but recognised that the preservation of this temper in our public life was more important than any of the issues on which they disagreed with him. At his jubilee celebration he received a letter from his old friend Robert Bridges which gave him special pleasure.

*Whit Monday, 1921*

MY DEAR SCOTT,

. . . You must be sick of congratulations, but will not reject the hearty greeting of an old friend. My admiration for your good honest life-work has been unbroken, and though I eschew politics and was always repugnant to the Gladstone-Baliol-Jowett-Asquith School, and hold the name of 'Liberal' in no more respect than *καλοκράγας*, I have been altogether sympathetic with you during these last years, and have recognised the solitary pre-eminence of the *M. G.* among the *Daylies*.

So I send you my humble tribute—and I wish you all health and happiness and an old age like Lord Bryce's.

Your affectionate friend,

ROBERT BRIDGES

'Do you ever reflect on one thing,' wrote Mr Garvin at the time of Scott's eightieth birthday celebrations, 'I wager not, though it is true—the tremendous amount of good your spirit has done to so many of those whose views were not always the same as yours but often far different?'

What is perhaps more remarkable is the reputation Scott gained abroad.<sup>1</sup> When he left the chair of the *Manchester Guardian*, he received tributes from every country, tributes such as are only paid to writers and artists and statesmen who have struck the mind of the world. The reader who studied those tributes would understand what Wilson meant when he said that Scott was one of Europe's great men. For

<sup>1</sup> When Nansen was organising his campaign for relieving the Russian famine in 1922 he wrote to Scott: 'I do not think I am overstating the case when I say that your support will make all the difference between failure and success.'

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over the whole world the *Manchester Guardian* had come to stand for a moral force. What was the explanation? Clearly the *Guardian* could not please all these countries by its views and criticisms of foreign affairs, any more than it could please all parties in England by its views and criticisms of domestic affairs. Nor would anybody claim for it that its judgments were always wise or its analysis of events and forces always just and accurate. But it had made the same impression abroad that it had made at home; of a paper which was guided, whether it went right or wrong, whether it praised or blamed, by a large view and not a small view, by a generous and not a narrow spirit, by the desire to treat truth as the first need of good politics. And as self-respect and independence in the Press of every country were in danger from vested interests of one kind or another, the *Manchester Guardian* was valued for a quality that men prized more as they missed it more. It became the *lingua franca* of liberalism.

This quality was Scott's gift to his paper. His character was behind it. He was an Englishman as he was a Liberal. He was, that is, as English as a man could be, just as he was as Liberal as a man could be, by blood, training, culture, and inheritance. But just as he was never a party Liberal, so he was never a party Englishman. One significant fact may be noted. Among all his letters, written under shadows of every kind, the tone of despair is scarcely ever heard. There is one important exception. In January 1916, he wrote the following letter to Hobhouse.

January 25, 1916

Thanks for your letter and enclosures. This question of tariffs and a customs union after the War cuts pretty deep, and I should like to discuss it with you when you come down. I liked your leader, but the question of Free Trade, which we used to think so vital, is really subordinate and comparatively trifling by the side of those others. I hate the very thought of the permanent division and hostility in Europe which they contemplate, and if that is all we have to look forward to I feel as if the future had little interest for me

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and I had rather get out of it. It isn't the material loss or even the prospect necessarily involved of future wars and bloodshed; it is the enthronement in Europe—that is practically in the civilised world—of the spirit of hatred and revenge. I had rather take almost any material risk than accept that. I'm not sure that you feel like that and perhaps I exaggerate. But it is here that the dividing line of policy is going, I think, to assert itself, and already the division is beginning clearly enough, and it will not be a party division. Runciman's speech the other day pointed clearly enough to the organisation of a permanent antagonism and for that there will be the support of all the fear and hate left by the war.

Thus, almost the only time when his spirit failed him and he thought of himself as withdrawing from life, he was thinking not of danger and calamity in England, but of danger and calamity in the world.

For like all the greater Liberals of history Scott moved habitually in a larger world than the world of the debate in which he was taking part, whatever the immediate debate might be. His education, like that of most men of his day, had brought him to the study of a civilisation which had carried the human mind to superb achievement at a time when the English were still savage. Steeped in this large view of history, he remained English in temperament, in ideas, in spirit, in his whole attitude to life, but he was never the kind of Englishman who thinks that if all is well with England, it does not matter how it is with the rest of the world. His universe could never be shut up within the British Empire. The mind that guided the *Manchester Guardian* through all the storms of passion and violence was filled with the calm wisdom which remembers that 'millions of years have made us what we are'.

Scott was thus a Stoic, seeking and finding the Stoic's independence and self-possession. But so to describe him might mislead those who did not know him into thinking of him as a superior man, an austere man, a man shut up in his own circle of duties and high principles, difficult of

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access and distant in behaviour. Nothing could be more mistaken. Though Spartan by nature and principle, Scott could give to the misfortunes of others the sympathy he withheld from his own. He was self-controlled but never self-contained. His sympathy expressed itself with a courtesy and grace that gave distinction to his manners. Mr Harrod, a young Oxford don, describes their meeting when Scott was eighty. 'We had a long talk, he was infinitely kind and friendly, the gulf of years disappeared and I was captivated and longed to be his disciple. . . . I showed him to the gate and can still see him leaping on to his bicycle and plunging headlong into the middle of Oxford traffic.'

A conscientious objector recalls how he met him at a time when Scott's public cares were particularly absorbing. 'In those days acquaintances were apt to forget that they had ever met me and friends to forget me. It was my turn to appear before the tribunal. As I was leaving my house I met C. P. going into town. We were so slightly acquainted that I was doubtful whether he knew me, but he got off his bicycle, put his arm through mine, and as we walked down Oxford Street he talked as if my troubles alone were in his thoughts. No woman's touch, physical or spiritual, could have been more tender, and morphia never assuaged pain as his voice and sympathy soothed the wounds of an outcast.'

In conversation and society this simple dignity and charm were his most striking qualities. He was not the kind of talker who holds others by the pointed things he says, or by a sense for history or literature that takes a man easily from a small topic to a large. Scott's charm was the charm of a man of perfect manners, able to interest himself in whatever was interesting his friends, and always finding it easier to think or talk about others than about himself. A man might meet him and find nothing special about him, but that impression would soon disappear if some question came into view which touched his conscience or imagination or demanded his serious attention. Mr Arnold Toynbee, who had a talk with him on one occasion, without knowing who he was, wrote afterwards: 'The visual impression that remained in my mind was that of a bright

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dancing light coming rather unexpectedly out of the eyes of a calm distinguished figure, and making an effect of hidden fire and force beneath a cool quiet surface.'

Most men as they grow old revert to their memories. It is partly that they feel at home in their past as the present changes before their eyes into something unfamiliar if not unfriendly. It is partly that it needs an effort to think about new problems, and a man withdraws into history as an easy and lazy way of looking out on the life of the world. Scott, with his long and exciting experiences, would have been a more interesting talker if he had followed this habit of old age. But in this respect he was never an old man. He used to say that from the age of twenty-five he had lived for the next day's paper, and that in a life so lived the past has a slight hold on your mind. But there was another explanation. Scott's immense vitality made him ready to the last to face the problems of the present. In old age he kept his power of mastering facts and arguments, and his mind seemed to prefer such athletic exercise to moods of reverie or reminiscence.

This explains another unexpected trait in Scott. Though the ultimate basis of his happiness was his large view of the relation of man's life to the life of the world, that optimism about the law of progress which Dean Inge describes in the opening pages of *God and the Astronomers*, he did not turn, as many old men turn for refreshment and peace, to the universal writers and thinkers. He regretted that he had lost this habit under the pressure of his work in his early days on the *Guardian*. In a letter of advice to his son John, in March 1904, he wrote: 'What about general reading? It is essential food for one's soul and alas! mine has too often had but scanty diet, to my very great loss. For my sons I hope for something better.' When he was not reading books that he needed for his work, he read novels, or had novels read to him. Of modern writers his favourite was Galsworthy, one of whose works he generally carried in his pocket, but he was a great admirer of *The Constant Nymph*. Of other writers his favourites were Trollope, Thackeray, Meredith, Jane

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Austen, and George Eliot. He had no great taste for the Russians, though he enjoyed some of Turgenev.

Scott was a mystic immersed in a life of energetic duty. If it is possible to judge from his case, that combination makes a happy man. The calm and independence that gave him a power over others, gave him a rare power over himself. This was seen in his physical fortitude. For most of his life he had remarkably good health. At the age of eighty, he said he had never had a headache. Most men unaccustomed to pain take it hardly when it comes. Scott's friend and doctor, Mrs Atkinson, said that in the last years of his life he was scarcely ever free from pain in his back, the consequence of a fall from his bicycle. Of this he made no mention to his friends, only observing that he had lost his pleasure in walking. Mrs Atkinson gave an example of his Roman spirit.

His fortitude was amazing—he never referred to pain and would hardly ever admit that he was suffering—he seemed to have the Victorian idea that illness and pain were something to be ashamed of and due to some fault. The following is a typical example of his fortitude. Whilst staying at Bognor in 1931, he had been knocked off his bicycle at a level-crossing by a charabanc—the wheel of which had passed over his foot—breaking two metatarsal bones and crushing the foot very badly. The shoe was burst open—he had this stitched at a cobbler's before returning to his sister—who being twelve years older than himself, he wished to spare any little uneasiness!—he then went on to Oxford the next day to his daughter's—never mentioning the accident whilst there.

The pain getting worse and the accident also giving rise to a rather alarming hæmorrhage—I got the following characteristic letter: 'I am returning home to-morrow (Monday) and should be much obliged if you would come and see me. I hurt my foot when I was at Bognor. It isn't bad—but perhaps I ought to report.'

His habits of life were simple and Spartan. To the last he enjoyed a cold bath every morning in a room looking

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north. He had no tastes for luxury or display, though if he liked a thing he liked it at its best. Delighted by flowers from childhood to old age, he took infinite pains over his garden and his greenhouse. He travelled a great deal with his wife during her lifetime, but after the War he spent his holidays mainly in the Lakes enjoying the society of his friends, Professor and Mrs de Selincourt and Mrs Lejeune, and rowing on Derwentwater. One of his sisters, who, at the age of ninety, still kept open house for her friends, lived at Bognor, and there, a few months before his death, Scott entertained Gandhi.

Dill and Hobhouse both described Scott as a Puritan of the seventeenth century, a Puritan, that is, with a love of grace and beauty. His love of beauty followed the general law of his life. Few men enjoyed the beauty of Nature with such intensity, for he enjoyed it always and everywhere. Unlike Burke, who thought Nature more agreeable in summer than in winter, he liked the beauty of every season and the beauty he liked best was the beauty he was enjoying at the moment. Such sensibility as his brings to most men as much distress as delight, hurt as they are from day to day by all that they meet in life that is strident or disfigured. To Scott it brought only pleasure. Writing from Manchester on a winter's day to a friend basking under Italian skies, he said: 'The sun is shining and even here we have the joys of the heavens if not of the earth.' Every day on his way to the office he was reminded how much wealth a people can amass without learning to give harmony or grace to its towns, but he forgot the melancholy roofs of Manchester if a single ray of glancing sunlight broke into their gloom. Scott's happiness in his friendships was like his happiness in Nature. Most men growing old find themselves in a grey twilight. As death closes friendship after friendship, throwing shadow after shadow over the scene and setting of their lives, they think of the Roman curse, *Ultimus suorum moriatur*. Scott, a man of deep affection and sympathy, outlived colleagues who had given their youth to his paper when he was already in his

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middle years. But he seemed able to draw from friendship all that it offers of comfort and happiness, and to escape the longings and regrets that it leaves behind it. For he had brought his whole life into harmony with his religion. He always looked forward, and looked forward with hope. 'The most wonderful thing in the world,' he once said, 'is the jet of life in a little child.' The lines he loved best in poetry were the two lines of Coleridge:

And winter, slumbering in the open air,  
Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring.

A dream of spring. This it was that filled his mind, bringing courage not only to the world of nature but also to the world of man, guiding the rhythm of his little life, brightening the delights and soothing the sorrows that come and go, giving strength to purpose, constancy to friendship, and taking from memory her pain.





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